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A SIRE OF BATTLES

ASA M. STEELE.

A SIRE OF BATTLES

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS.

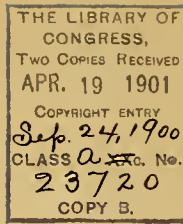
BY
Asa M. Steele
ASA M. STEELE.

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THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY

CIVILIANS :

HENRY CULBERTSON.

SILAS TOWNSEND, *a Quaker Blacksmith.*

CAESAR, *a Negro Slave.*

RUTH WELDIN.

MRS. SOPHIE HENDERSON, *her Aunt.*

MRS. DOLLIE ALLEN.

MARY SCATTERGOOD.

CLOE, *Mrs. Henderson's Negress.*

MRS. BARKLEY, *of the Black Horse Tavern*

FROM THE ENGLISH FORCES :

LIEUTENANT DEVILLIERS.

COLONEL CLEMENT.

MAJOR SAUNDERS.

COLONEL BLACKWELL.

CAPTAIN GOWER.

SERGEANT O'LEARY.

HARRIS, *Secretary to Clement.*

A SOLDIER.

FROM THE CONTINENTAL FORCES :

COLONEL KANE.

SERGEANT WORBY.

PRIVATE HANSON.

PRIVATE HOBART.

OTHER GUESTS, ENGLISH OFFICERS, ETC.

THE FIRST ACT.

In the Living Room of the Black Horse Tavern, Valley Forge. October 1st, 1777.

THE SECOND ACT.

In Mrs. Henderson's Drawing Room at Germantown. October 2nd, 1777.

THE THIRD ACT.

In the Garden, near Mrs. Henderson's House. An Hour Later.

THE FOURTH ACT.

In Mrs. Henderson's Drawing Room. The Next Morning

THE FIRST ACT.

The scene represents the living room of the Black Horse Tavern at Valley Forge, an interior that is homelike and comfortable, although bearing many traces of primitive frontier life. Through the white-wash of the walls, the logs of which they are composed are plainly visible. The floor is of stone flags, the ceiling raftered, and hung with smoked meats and clusters of drying herbs. A fireplace occupies most of the left side of the room. At the back, a small many-paned window, with a rude timber door to the left of it. On the right a narrow stairway leads up to a door in a corner of the room, that opens upon another flight of several steps. On the right, near the front of the scene, another door leading into the kitchen.

The furniture is simple, even rude, and painted dark green. An armchair on the hearth rug. Near the center, a table, surrounded by chairs and a stool. In an angle of the wall below the fireplace, a large chest, with a picture of King George III suspended above it. Above the fireplace a cupboard with blue and white china, of the "willow" pattern.

The action takes place on a frosty night early in October, 1777. A brisk fire burns on the hearth. Lighted candles upon the table and high mantel shelf, illuminate the room dimly. The table is set for supper with some of the blue and white china.

When the curtain rises, the stage is empty. The beating of a drum sounds in the distance, gradually drawing nearer until it seems to be beneath the window at back.

COLONEL KANE (*speaking without*). Halt. (*The drum stops beating.*) Order arms. Stack arms. (*The clatter of guns is heard.*) Break ranks.

(*Men's voices and laughter heard without. A knock at the door at the back.*)

PRIVATE HANSON (*without*). Open! Open!

(*A more peremptory knock. Hanson opens the door slightly and looks in.*)

HANSON. The camp is deserted.

(He flings open the door and enters, followed by Sergeant Worby and Private Hobart. The men are ragged and muddy, in citizen's dress, but wearing the accoutrements of soldiers. They are chilled with the night air.)

WORBY *(coming down right)*. I smell cooking. *(Sniffing.)*
The scent leads thither.

HOBART *(sitting at table)*. That means supper. The first home meal in six weeks.

HANSON *(coming down left and pointing to picture of King George.)* See! England's King. *(Drawing his knife.)* I'll have your scalp, Georgie.

(Worby has thrown open door of kitchen on right and bows ceremoniously to Mrs. Barkley in the outer room.)

WORBY. How-de-do, Madame.

MRS. BARKLEY *(screaming from the kitchen, then in a complaining voice)*. Get out of here, ye ragged vagabond.

WORBY. Why, dear, I wouldn't harm ye for the world. *(Mrs. Barkley enters quickly from the kitchen.)*

MRS. B. *(as she comes in)*. I'm only a defenseless woman, and—*(She sees Hanson and Hobart, and begins to sob hysterically.)*

WORBY. Lordy! What's the matter?

MRS. B. *(between her sobs)*. Hav'n't I troubles enough, but ye beggarly rascals must come here and disturb me peace,—do violence to me house and person. If my man John was alive——

WORBY *(taking her arm)*. We'll get ye another John.

(Mrs. B. shakes him off, sobs hysterically, throws herself into a chair, puts her apron over her head, and sways to and fro. The three men look at her and each other ruefully.)

HOBART. We can't answer such arguments.

HANSON. Give it up, Sergeant. We're defeated.

WORBY *(to Mrs. B.)* But, darlint——

(Enter Colonel Kane at back. He is dressed in the Continental uniform of blue and buff, and is also weather-stained and muddy.)

KANE *(peremptorily)*. Worby! Hanson!

(The three soldiers come to an attitude of "attention," and salute. Mrs. B. stops crying.)

KANE. You're disobeying orders.

WORBY. Colonel——

KANE *(pointing to door)*. To your posts.

HOBART *(apologetically)*. The chance of a solid meal, Colonel——

KANE. Zounds, sir! Are you not trained to go hungry? *(Points to door.)*

(Worby, Hobart and Hanson exeunt at back, sheepishly. Kane turns to the door as they go out and closes it after them.)

(Mrs. B. has crossed stealthily to left, and, while Kane's back is turned, snatches the picture of King George from the wall, and hides it behind the chest. She then sits precipitiously on the chest, and sobs as Kane approaches her.)

MRS. B. What right has General Washington—*(sob)* to send his soldiers here—*(sob)* to insult defenseless females?

KANE *(Indifferently)*. When you feel relieved ma'am. I'm in no hurry.

(Mrs. B. stops sobbing abruptly, and turns on the chest very angry.)

MRS. B. Fudge!

KANE. That's better. A clear sky is more cheerful for business. *(Mrs. B. stamps her foot in rage)*. We are here to guard the highroad. Your tavern must be our headquarters.

MRS. B. *(holding out her hand and speaking sharply)*. Pay me then.

KANE. I see. A Tory.

MRS. B. No. I'm neutral *(sobs)*—only a poor, defenseless female. *(She goes up to the window at back)*.

KANE. What guests have you?

MRS. B. None. *(Looking out of window)*. Your soldiers go into my barn. Why can't they sleep in the fields, where they belong—the cattle.

KANE. Your guests?

MRS. B. *(turning sharply)*. The house is empty, I tell ye.

KANE (*surveying the table*). Hum. Supper for three.

MRS. B. (*embarrassed*). Myself—and——

KANE. Two travellers. Who are they?

MRS. B. (*tearfully*). If my man John was alive——

KANE. I must interrupt this enjoyment you're having. Your book please.

(*Mrs. B. hesitates, then goes to the cupboard, finds her registry book, and carries it to Kane at the table. Kane opens the book and turns over several of its leaves.*)

KANE (*pausing at a page and reading*). "October 1st, 1777. " They came today then? (*reads*) "Silas Townsend, —Ruth Townsend,—Lancaster." (*To Mrs. B.*) Please summon them.

MRS. B. They left an hour since.

KANE (*with determination*). Must I search the house? (*He goes toward the stairway at right.*)

(*Mrs. B. intercepting him and with a conciliatory tone.*) 'Tis but a Quaker blacksmith and his child.

KANE. Summon them please.

(*Mrs. B. exits up the stairs at right.*)

(*Kane crosses to fireplace and warms his hands.*)

KANE (*after a moment of reflection*). If it should be? No, he was to come from Philadelphia. (*Takes a letter from his pocket, glances suspiciously about to see that he is alone, then reads.*) "Go to the Black Horse Tavern. There await our messenger. He will make his identity known by displaying a silver powder-horn, curiously wrought, and whispering 'The King hunts.'" (*repeating to himself*) "A silver powder horn, curiously wrought—The King hunts." (*He meanwhile replaces letter in his pocket.*) Philadelphia is not mentioned. Can it be he?

(*Silas Townsend enters and descends stairs at right, closely followed by Mrs. B., who exits into kitchen, right, Townsend is an aged Quaker, with flowing gray hair, ruddy complexion and dress of gray broadcloth, severely plain. He is gentle during the opening portion of the following scene, and speaks without a trace of that whining cant, sometimes attributed to the sect.*)

TOWNSEND. Thee has business with me, friend?

KANE. You are Silas Townsend?

TOWNSEND. Yea. Of Lancaster.

KANE. And journey to?

TOWNSEND. Philadelphia.

KANE. And your daughter?

TOWNSEND. Thy business is with her, too? (*Kane bows, Townsend goes to the foot of the stairs and calls*). Ruth! Ruth! Daughter! (*He turns to Kane*). And now, friend, what wouldst thou?

KANE (*with significance*). A silver powder-horn, curiously wrought.

TOWNSEND (*surprised*). I never owned such a thing.

KANE. Does the King hunt?

TOWNSEND. Does he? I don't know. (*Aside*). The man is daft. (*Tapping his forehead and his finger, then aloud to Kane*). Is this all thy business?

KANE. No. I desire your pass through the American lines.

TOWNSEND. I am a Quaker, friend, and believe not in armies nor war. Therefore I need no pass.

KANE. Then I must detain you.

TOWNSEND. Detain me? (*Aside, and very nervously*.) He grows dangerous.

KANE. A pass is the alternative.

TOWNSEND (*aside*). I must humor him. (*Withdrawing from Kane, nervously*.) Friend, thou seemest unstrung. Thou needest rest and quiet. A night's sleep is a great aid to those suffering from—ah—from mental excitement.

KANE. What's the matter with your mind?

TOWNSEND. My mind? Nothing,—that is—I—I—Oh, I don't know what to think. (*Aside*). I wonder if it is contagious?

KANE. Then you think *I'm* crazy.

TOWNSEND. It may be both our minds.

KANE. Me? Crazy? (*Laughs heartily*.)

TOWNSEND. Thou saidest the King went hunting with a silver powder horn.

KANE (*laughing*). They were countersigns, man.

TOWNSEND. (*Throwing up his hands*). I'm fooled! Then if thou art not insane, what didst thou mean by demanding my pass?

KANE. I was in deadly earnest about that, too.

TOWNSEND (*surprised*). In earnest? Truly in earnest?

KANE. Entirely so.

TOWNSEND. Then I say, equally in earnest, thou shalt have no pass from me.

KANE. I will and must.

TOWNSEND. By what right?

KANE. The right of war.

TOWNSEND (*with rising anger*). A plague on thy war as thou callest it. I know of no war. Surely thou dost not mean a band of vagabonds—of rioters—going about the country stirring up strife, stealing, murdering——

KANE (*vexed*). A pass, or you are deterred—by force.

TOWNSEND. (*greatly enraged*). Force? Didst thou say force? Lay thy hands on me, if thou darest. Oh! All abomination upon thee. Thou fooldest me first and now offerest violence—me, a harmless wayfarer, a Friend, a man of peace, who scorns the thought of war. Thou wouldst take from me that liberty for which thou fightest. (*With clenched fists.*) Oh! Oh! Oh! Confusion pursue thee! (*Walking to and fro.*) A peaceful man going about his business and held in duress by such as thee. Arrest me? Drag me before thy upstart leader? Subject my daughter to insult,—the insults of a band of rogues? (*He stops directly in front of Kane.*) Oh! Friend, there are times when one forgets he is a man of peace, and smites! (*Raises his arm to strike Kane.*)

KANE (*gazes into Townsend's eyes a moment, then says sarcastically*). A man of peace, indeed! (*Townsend drops his arm in shame. Kane looks over Townsend's shoulder and perceives Ruth Weldin, who has appeared on stairway at right.*) And in the presence of your daughter, too.

(*Ruth comes down stairway and advances. She is dressed in the plain garb of a Quakeress, with a white kerchief about*

her neck, the ends crossed upon her bosom. On her head she wears a tight-fitting cap of white muslin.)

RUTH. What does the soldier want—*(hesitating slightly)*—father?

TOWNSEND. Detain us. Drag us before his upstart leader.

RUTH *(to Kane, apologetically)*. Father is fatigued, harrassed, unpracticed in war. How has he offended you,—ah, I mean—thee?

(Kane starts when she misuses the pronoun, and looks at Ruth, suspiciously.)

RUTH *(pleading)*. Oh, sir, we offer no violence to thee, or thy cause. If—if thou shouldst detain us,—I—I—*(tears seem to gather in her eyes, and she wipes them away with her handkerchief.)*

KANE *(embarrassed)*. War is a brutal thing, mistress. Yet nothing is farther away from my thoughts than violence to the defenceless. *(He crosses to the door of the kitchen, right, turns and bows.)* You shall be unmolested.

RUTH. Oh, I thank you—thee.

KANE. I must report the case to General Washington. Meanwhile, this house is yours—I mean—thine.

TOWNSEND. And our departure?

KANE. That is a different matter. *(Bowing, he exits into kitchen.)*

(When the door closes upon Kane, Ruth drops her tearful demeanor, and turns angrily to Townsend.)

RUTH. Oh, Silas, what a fool you've been. Father will never forgive you.

TOWNSEND *(meekly)*. When I explain their violence to Judge Weldin—

RUTH. *Your* violence you mean. Had you kept your temper, we shouldn't have been in this fix. Father thought you cautious and cool headed. Pshaw! When you should have been cunning, you were rash, when cool, you fly into a passion. And now, we are at the mercy of these ruffians—

TOWNSEND. In truth, Miss Ruth——

RUTH (*with rising anger.*) He saw through my disguise when I said “you” for “thee,” I’m sure of it. Oh, why did I try to pose as a Quakeress? I ought to have travelled as Ruth Weldin, a judge’s daughter, not Ruth Townsend, a smithy’s child.

TOWNSEND. Truly, if thou hadst——

RUTH (*interrupting petulantly.*) I should have received more consideration, I’m sure. In our chariot and four, with black Philip on the box, and outriders, and dressed in my flowered brocade—the very sight of me would have made them stand aside.

TOWNSEND. ’Twould but increase the danger. Thy name could not be concealed, nor that thy father was a Tory. Thou wouldst have been waylaid.

RUTH. Cold comfort that. (*Very angry.*) Could it be worse than it is? (*Mrs. Barkley appears in the door of the kitchen. Ruth suddenly resumes her mild Quaker manner.*) As thou sayest, father, we must be resigned.

(*Mrs. B. carries a tray of dishes containing supper. She places it on the table and prepares for the meal.*)

Mrs. B. (*in a whining voice.*) Ye had trouble, did ye?

TOWNSEND. Yea. They have detained us.

Mrs. B. It was of ye, then, that the Colonel spoke in the door-yard.

RUTH. Of us?

TOWNSEND. What did he say?

Mrs. B. That all might enter, but none leave the house. If anyone attempts it, he gets powder and shot.

RUTH. Oh?

TOWNSEND (*with resignation.*) Truly this is a time that calls for Christian fortitude.

Mrs. B. (*at the table.*) Will ye sit, and eat?

TOWNSEND. Verily. I have a mighty hunger. (*He sits on the right side of the table and eagerly uncovers the central dish.*) Corn porridge! Tea! (*Ruefully.*) Abomination!

Mrs. B. You’re lucky to get that. War means starva-

tion to us. Provender is scarce already. And what must the rascals do last week? Why, carry off the haystack and burn my cornfield.

(During this remark, Ruth had seated herself behind the table, and Mrs. B. takes her place on the left side of it. They take portions and eat a moment in silence.)

RUTH *(after tasting her tea)*. What peculiar tea.

MRS. B. We hav'n't had tea since the war began. It's raspberry leaves.

RUTH *(taking a sip of the tea, then with a grimace)*. I call this true heroism.

(A horse is heard approaching in the distance, gradually drawing nearer. Ruth, Townsend and Mrs. B. stop eating to listen. Shouts are heard at back. The hoof beats stop suddenly. Mrs. B. runs to the window at back.)

MRS. B. *(looking out of the window)*. A traveller. They are questioning him. He dismounts. They hold a lantern to his face. Oh! How handsome! *(Turns, and comes down)*. He's coming in.

TOWNSEND. To thy chamber, Ruth. Go. *(Rises)*.

(Ruth approaches the stairway as the door at the back opens and Henry Cuthbertson appears. He is a young man in travelling coat and boots, and stands for a moment confronting Ruth, both evincing surprise at the meeting. Then Ruth turns quickly and approaches the stairway.)

HENRY *(advancing)*. Pardon this intrusion. *(Mrs. B. comes forward with a smirk and curtsey)*. My hostess?

MRS. B. Yes, sir.

HENRY. These Rebels have detained me. I seek lodging here.

MRS. B. Welcome sir. *(She bustles up to the cupboard and brings registry book down to the table)*. Sign please.

(After a moment of hesitation, Henry signs his name in the book).

HENRY. And now, supper. *(He gives money to Mrs. B.)*

MRS. B. All I have is cooked for these guests. If they will share.

TOWNSEND (*ruefully and aside*). There is not enough now for a hearty meal.

RUTH (*advancing*). Certainly. If thee wishes it.

HENRY. I thank you. (*He bows low and gazes at Ruth intently, Ruth, who has been watching him, drops her eyes. Henry crosses to the fireplace and warms his hands*).

RUTH (*looking at the registry book on the table, aside*). Henry Culbertson, I knew it. (*She sits at the table, apparently face to face with a dilemma*).

(*Mrs. B. has laid fresh dishes at her own place at the table, and replaces the registry book in the cupboard*).

(*Colonel Kane enters quickly from the kitchen, advances and interrogates Henry*).

KANE. You come from Philadelphia?

HENRY. Yes.

KANE. Perhaps you can tell me?

HENRY (*supercilliously*). I am not in the habit of gossiping with tavern loafers.

MRS. B. (*speaking to Ruth, in an undertone*). I knew he was a gentleman.

KANE (*angrily, to Henry*). You are speaking to a Colonel in General Washington's——

HENRY (*interrupting sharply*). General Washington? What is he? A traitor to the law and his King. I do not recognize him.

KANE (*advancing, with his hand upon his sword*). You——

HENRY. You forget yourself, sir, in the presence of these women.

KANE. I need no instructions, sir. At fitting time and place, you shall feel the authority of General Washington.

HENRY (*defiantly, and with arm uplifted*). God save King George!

(*The others show alarm and consternation*).

KANE. Zounds! (*For a moment he and Henry face each other fiercely, then Kane, with baffled rage, exits into the kitchen*).

TOWNSEND. Well done. (*He resumes his place at the table, and indicates opposite seat.*) Be seated, friend.

(*Ruth resumes her place at the table. Townsend begins to eat very fast.*)

HENRY (*to Mrs. B.*). You will prepare my lodging?

MRS. B. (*curtseying*). At once, sir. (*She disappears up the stairs.*)

(*Henry, standing by the fireplace, begins to remove his coat, looking at Ruth. He pauses, with the garment partly off, shakes his head in doubt, then, apparently failing to settle the question in his mind concerning Ruth's identity, he removes the coat, flings it over a chair and advances to a table. Here he pauses again, with his hand on the back of his chair, gazing at Ruth and renewing his mental argument.*)

TOWNSEND (*pausing in his eating*). Be seated.

HENRY (*with hesitation*). Have I—ah—met you before?

TOWNSEND (*as he eats ravenously*). I am Silas Townsend, of Lancaster. (*Nodding his head toward Ruth.*) My daughter, Ruth.

(*During the following Ruth assumes an uncouth manner. She now nods her head, looking up while she eats.*)

RUTH. How is thee?

HENRY (*sitting and beginning to eat*). Townsend—
Townsend. I have many friends in Lancaster, yet do not remember the name.

TOWNSEND. Thou doubtless saw my smithy as thou approached the town.

HENRY (*absently*). Possibly. Possibly.

(*A moment of silence, during which they eat.*)

(*Mrs. Barkley descends the stairway and advances, curtseying.*)

MRS. B. Your bed is ready, sir.

HENRY. And I am ready for bed.

(*Mrs. B. exits into the kitchen.*)

(*As the trio partake of the meal, Ruth looks at Henry earnestly. He raises his eyes to hers. The girl's glance falls to*

her plate in embarrassment. Henry takes a dish and hands it to her.)

HENRY. Your plate is quite empty.

RUTH (*taking the dish*). I thank thee. (*She helps herself from the dish and resumes eating, with eyes upon her plate. Henry again surveys her features.*)

TOWNSEND (*to Henry*). Thou met with difficulties coming from Philadelphia?

(*Henry pays no attention, but is observing Ruth intently.*)

TOWNSEND (*in a louder tone*). Thou met with difficulties——

HENRY (*suddenly awakening from his day dream*). Eh? What?

TOWNSEND. On thy way from Philadelphia?

HENRY. Ah, yes. The road is scarcely passable.

TOWNSEND. Then the King's troops are in full possession?

HENRY. The fleet lies in the Delaware river. As yet the city is only occupied by Lord Cornwallis and a detachment. The main body of the army is at Germantown.

TOWNSEND. The Lancaster road is open?

HENRY. Ah, the troops constitute the lesser danger. The neutral ground is infested with lawless bands. All is disorder, violence, plunder. Surely you do not think to journey thither?

TOWNSEND. We must.

(*A moment of silence, during which they eat.*)

TOWNSEND. Who dost thou know in Lancaster?

HENRY. My uncle lived there—Julius Clark.

(*Ruth darts an apprehensive glance toward Townsend.*)

TOWNSEND. Ah! One of our foremost citizens. A sad loss his death was, too.

RUTH. I should say so. (*Henry glances at Ruth. She is unconcernedly eating with her knife, and ignores his look.*)

HENRY (*recalling happy memories*). What glorious days I spent in Lancaster as a boy. What friends I made—dear friends. I had a sweetheart, too, aged twelve—a little girl

that lived next door. (*Ruth drops her knife with a clatter. Henry pretends not to notice it.*) Such a dainty maid. Eyes that might have stolen their amethyst from an October sky. Her hair? The golden sheen of an autumnal woodland. A cheek as soft as the mists in a valley, when sunset kisses them. (*To Townsend.*) You must know her, Judge Weldin's daughter, Ruth.

TOWNSEND (*greatly embarrassed*). I—thee—that is—

(*Ruth interrupts desperately. She sits with her fists on the table, holding her knife and spoon upright in either hand.*)

RUTH (*roughly*). Ruth Weldin? Oh, yes, I know her. A stiff-necked minx, full of pride and vain-glory.

HENRY. Indeed? Then I'm glad I *don't* know her.

RUTH. Quite heartless to her suitors.

HENRY. She was always that.

RUTH (*offended*). That is, they say so, I never met her myself. She is far too proud for smithy's daughters.

HENRY. Enough. My last regret is dead.

RUTH (*trying to conciliate him*). It may be only idle gossip, thee knows.

HENRY. There must be some fire to so much smoke. (*Sighs.*) My mind picture was so different. My little sweetheart grown to charming womanhood. Beautiful, gracious, lovable and yet, with a touch of wayward piquancy that added uncertainty to her favors. (*Turning to Ruth.*) Indeed, I fancied she resembled you.

RUTH (*rising in embarrassment*). Flatterer!

HENRY. Pardon, I interrupted your meal.

RUTH. I have finished. (*She retires to the window.*)

TOWNSEND. So have I. (*Ruefully.*) There's nothing more to eat.

(*Mrs. Barkley enters from the kitchen.*)

MRS. B. (*hysterically, to Townsend*). I'm sure we'll all be murdered before the night is out. Those rogues are in the stable, looking at your horses. They'll be stolen first thing you know.

TOWNSEND. They would not dare. (*He rises hastily and*

approaches the door of the kitchen.) Daughter, get thee to thy chamber.

RUTH. Yea, father.

(Townsend exits into the kitchen.)

(Mrs. Barkley has removed the dishes from the table, and follows Townsend.)

(Ruth is about to mount the stairs, when Henry detains her with a gesture.)

HENRY. Miss——

RUTH. Townsend.

HENRY. Your road to-morrow will be difficult, and beset with dangers. If I may accompany—protect you.

RUTH. Oh, sir, I am not afraid.

HENRY. These lawless marauders——

RUTH *(assuming a belligerent manner.)* Molest me? Let them try. I'm a smithy's daughter, thee knows.

HENRY. A strong arm——

RUTH *(feeling her arm.)* Like mine.

HENRY *(drawing his pistol.)* Assisted by——

RUTH *(very much frightened.)* Oh! The ugly black thing. Put it away. It might explode.

HENRY. Should a highwayman point this in your face—
(Raising the pistol slightly.)

RUTH *(with a little scream, and putting her hands over her face.)* Oh! yes, on second thought, thou mayest accompany us. But we start very early. To-morrow must see us at our journey's end. The next is First Day, thee knows.

HENRY *(fondly.)* To-day is the first day—the first day of a new life for me. *(He approaches her.)*

RUTH *(retreating from him.)* Thou dost not understand. By "First Day" a Quaker means Sunday.

HENRY *(turning from her.)* You grieve me, mistress.

RUTH *(approaching him shyly.)* Such was not my intent. Forgive me, wilt thou not?

HENRY. Forgive? *(Approaching her.)* Nay, rather should I be the suppliant, you a queen—bestowing kingdoms in a smile, banishment and despair with each denial. Oh,

mistress, could you but know what this meeting means to me. 'Tis one glimpse of paradise in a woman's eyes. (*Ruth's glance meets his for a moment, then she again retreats from him. Henry evinces discouragement.*) And yet, every effort to make our friendship more steadfast, is met with denial and repulse.

RUTH. Thou forgettest. I may look with favor upon none but Friends.

HENRY. Am I not your friend?

RUTH. I mean the Society of Friends, Quakers thou wouldst call us. Beside, I am but a passing acquaintance. Thou forgettest thy old sweetheart, Ruth.

HENRY. Better so.

RUTH. Nay, I was unjust and harsh, perhaps. She may not be the woman I thought. What image dost thy mind picture?

HENRY. Ah, her face is with me ever, as is this symbol of our troth. (*He displays a piece of coin, which hangs suspended by a chain about his neck.*) A fragment of severed shilling, say you? Yet the other half should nestle upon her bosom even now. (*Ruth turns from him in embarrassment.*) I forget. This cannot interest you.

RUTH (*eagerly*). It does. It does. (*Gently.*) I, too, had a sweetheart once. And by this tailsman?

HENRY. We promised to love and remember all our days. Remember? (*He looks fondly upon the coin.*) Gazing upon this, I have pictured her dear lineaments day by day and month by month. I have seen her grow into womanhood—her face, her smile, the radiance of her glance, eternally pictured in my thoughts. I have waited—waited and longed for that sweet hour when—I, a man—she, a woman—I could go to her—(*he goes toward Ruth extending the coin*)—with this fragment of coin, and claim the fulfillment of her promise.

RUTH (*with a sigh*). Her promise?

HENRY. Ah, yes. How I live again that summer day. It was in his father's barn—a warm, dusty, fragrant place,

filled with dark silence and the breath of living things. We built a cave amongst the hay, with walls burrowed beneath the tallest stack, and overhead a roof of sticks and yellow straw. Playing at house, the floor served as our table, and for the banquet, armsful of fruit filched from the nearby garden—apples, golden pears and purple grapes.

RUTH. And then?

HENRY. I said we could play house always. She answered not, but only sang, and sang. Ah, that dear refrain—"Dost thy sweetheart"—

RUTH (*beginning to sing*). "Woo with tender sigh."
(*Speaking.*) Thou seest, I know it well. (*She resumes singing the song.*)

HENRY (*aside*). Her voice!

RUTH. The song ends in a denial. Did'st thy wooing do the same? (*She resumes singing.*)

HENRY. I told her all that was in my heart. She answered not, except as you sing now. Then, before the words of denial were uttered, I seized her hand. (*He takes Ruth's hand in his.*) She did not resist. I took her in my arms. (*He embraces Ruth.*)

RUTH (*singing, as she releases herself*). "But she only answered 'Nay, nay, nay!'" (*Speaking.*) 'Thou forgettest. I am not Ruth Weldin. (*She retreats from him.*)

HENRY. You are. Even Ruth,—My Ruth!

RUTH (*alarmed*). Thou thinkest?

HENRY. I know. Your disguise is as thin as the kerchief about your neck. And when I heard that song—

RUTH (*interrupting him angrily*). You let me go on, knowing full well?

HENRY. Had I not cause? My sweetheart under a false name and in disguise? How could I guess the why or wherefore—what danger your secret might conceal? (*He approaches her.*)

RUTH. No word, no look of recognition—

HENRY. On my face, no. But in my heart? (*He smiles, happily.*) 'Twas sweet, so sweet. I let you go on, hoping,

trusting that by some word, some sign, you would answer me. You still wore the token.

RUTH (*quickly putting a hand to her bosom*). My token?

HENRY. And as I saw it nestling there, half concealed, what could I think but that you remembered?

RUTH. 'Twas years ago. A child's promise, half meant.

(*Henry tears his token from his neck and extends it toward her.*)

HENRY. Then I return this, as I agreed, at your command.

RUTH (*hesitating*). You value it?

HENRY. Here dies a sweet dream, cherished for many a year—in boyhood, in youth, in manhood.

RUTH (*softly*). I never thought you still loved me.

HENRY. Loved you? I always loved you. This symbol of our promise is more precious than wealth, or rank, or fame. (*He kisses the shilling, then holds it toward her once more.*) Take it again. (*Ruth is silent.*) Receive it, and our promise is as if it had never been. (*Ruth is silent.*) Answer me.

RUTH. You had best keep it.

HENRY (*with great joy*). You—love me?

RUTH. I cannot tell. (*Turning to him.*) But I think—
(*Henry attempts to seize her in his arms. She waves him aside.*)
See what time brings forth. Wait! Wait!

(*The door from the kitchen is thrown open and Colonel Kane enters.*)

KANE (*to Henry*). Sir, you are my prisoner.

RUTH (*greatly frightened*). Arrest him?

(*Henry quickly draws his pistols, Kane approaches him in a position of attack, his sword drawn. By a quick movement, Kane disarms Henry, wounding his hand. Kane seizes Henry around the body.*)

HENRY (*whispering to Kane*). The king hunts. (*He draws a silver powder horn from beneath his coat.*)

KANE (*releasing Henry*). You surrender?

HENRY. Yes.

RUTH. Thou wouldst not— (*She sees Henry's wounded hand.*) Wounded?

HENRY (*wincing with pain*). A trifle.

(*Ruth takes her handkerchief from her girdle, and bandages Henry's hand with it.*)

HENRY (*fondly, to Ruth*). What are cold words of thanks?

KANE (*to Henry*). I must search you. If the lady will withdraw——

(*Ruth crosses and begins to mount the stairway. Henry turns toward her fondly. Ruth passes, draws her talisman from her bosom, kisses it and disappears up the stairs.*)

(*When Ruth has made her exit, Kane laughs heartily, turning to Henry.*)

KANE. I congratulate you. The comedy was well enacted.

HENRY (*sadly*). It was tragedy to me. Oh, that I must play this part. Patriot and Tory—I deceive them both.

(*Ruth is heard singing the love song in the distance.*)

HENRY (*going to the stairway and listening*). Even she—she must not know. The thought is a thousand daggers.

KANE (*gaily*). A maid more or less——

HENRY (*turning sharply upon Kane*). My sweetheart!

KANE (*greatly surprised*). Sweetheart? Poor fellow. (*He throws his arm over Henry's shoulder and grasps his hand, with sincere sympathy.*) Poor fellow.

HENRY (*leaving him*). Oh, I am weary of it all. Why cannot I tell the truth—that sympathies, my heart, my very life belongs to this cause.

KANE (*seeking to comfort Henry*). He knows. What more can you wish? Of all our men, you are chosen for this dangerous mission—given the supreme token of his confidence.

HENRY. Coward that I am. (*He seizes Kane's hand.*) Forgive me.

KANE. And now to our affairs.

HENRY. First, my credentials. (*He takes a paper from his pocket and hands it to Kane.*)

KANE (*reading from the paper*). "The bearer is a patriot,"—"Afford every consideration,"—"George Washington." (*He hands the paper back to Henry.*) Your news?

HENRY. The General is waiting a chance to strike a decisive blow?

KANE. True enough. Well?

HENRY. That chance has come.

KANE. Victory! But how? And where?

HENRY. Mingling with the royal officers at Germantown, I learned that forces were gradually being withdrawn to attack our forts on the Delaware.

KANE. They seek to reduce them. Well?

HENRY. Yesterday a soldier departed with letters to the fleet. Could I but learn their contents, said I, my work is done.

KANE (*eagerly*). You did?

HENRY. Better than that. Scarce stopping to saddle my horse, I rode post haste to the city, there hired three footpads—desperate fellows—like myself—ready for bribes and adventure. Along comes our messenger, gay in scarlet and gold (*imitating*) riding so bravely that the girls all turned in amaze. (*Kane laughs, Henry joining in his merriment.*) He went to the tap-room. We pledged him the health of King George, again and again, and left him kissing the barmaid. (*Kane laughs.*) His sweets were half gathered as we rode to the woods near the ferry. There we lay in the marsh and briars, now trembling with hope as some horseman approached, now deep in despair, when it proved not he. We saw not his face as he came, but heard the rattle of arms on his saddle, the ballad he was singing about Polly at home—that far away home over seas. Like wolves we sprang upon him. Down he came from the saddle. Away went the horse, screaming with terror. A struggle of madmen, a blow with a fagot, and there he lay by the roadside, silent and

vanquished. A mighty man that Corporal Martin—he fought like a tiger.

KANE. His dispatches?

HENRY (*quickly withdrawing a packet from his bosom*). Here!

KANE (*opening and eagerly perusing the dispatches*). At last! Our chance has come. (*Reading*) “The enemy will move toward the Delaware”—“we send reinforcements.” (*Turning to Henry*) But the number of troops Howe is withdrawing?

HENRY. I know not.

KANE. If two hundred, we dare not attack. If two thousand, victory is ours.

HENRY. I will return for the numbers.

KANE. If caught as Martin’s assailant?

HENRY. Bah! What is danger?

KANE. Learn the numbers and positions of the enemy. Meanwhile we advance. Your next message will be our signal for battle.

(*The sound of a falling body is heard from the stairway, then Ruth, sobbing with pain.*)

RUTH (*outside the door of the stairway*). Oh! Oh! Help me! Oh! Oh!

(*Henry and Kane run up the stairway, fling open the door, and lift Ruth from the steps upon which she is lying.*)

HENRY. You are hurt?

RUTH (*sobbing*). Oh! Oh!

HENRY (*to Kane*). Help me.

(*The two men assist Ruth down the stairs.*)

KANE. What has happened?

RUTH (*apparently in great pain*). Oh! I cannot step on this foot at all. (*With a little scream.*) Carefully! Not so fast! (*They reach a chair by the table, and Ruth sinks into it with a moan.*) I was coming down the stairs, slipped and fell, then— (*She attempts to move her foot, then sobs with pain.*)

KANE. Your ankle?

RUTH. Sprained, I think. Call father! Quickly.
(Impatiently, as neither man shows a disposition to go.) Go!
 Go!

(Kane exits quickly into the kitchen.)

(As soon as he is off Ruth's manner is transformed. She rises with energy and turns to Henry.)

RUTH *(pointing to the door at back)*. Your way lies there. Quickly! Before he returns.

HENRY *(greatly surprised)*. Your ankle?

RUTH. A ruse. That you might escape. *(Pointing to the door.)* Yonder lies the high road—woods—safety.

HENRY. You do this?

RUTH. For your cause and mine—for King George.

HENRY *(conscience stricken)*. I will not go.

RUTH. Oh, what is ours or any cause besides your safety? That is what I seek. *(Henry hesitates.)* I ask this. I, Ruth Weldin, who, in our childhood—— *(She hesitates.)*

HENRY. For your sake alone?

RUTH *(softly)*. Yes.

HENRY. For you I go. *(He bends and kisses her hand.)*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

THE SECOND ACT.

The scene represents the drawing-room of Mrs. Henderson's house, near Germantown. It is a stately apartment, with richly carved pilasters and pediments about the doorways, window, alcove and above the fireplace, these ornaments following the classic outlines that were the fashion of the time. A wainscot extends around the walls, the white panels reaching upwards about three feet from the floor. Above this the room is hung with paper repeating the "Pineapple and Rose" design. The mantel and fireplace are on the right, with a door on the upper side opening into the library of the mansion. On the left a double door of mahogany. The back of the scene is almost entirely occupied by an arch, opening upon a semi-circular bow window, with casements of many panes. The sashes are hung with green "Venetian" blinds, and the arch with red damask curtains. Beyond the window is seen an autumnal landscape, the tents of the British camp and houses scattered along a single street.

Portraits ornament the walls and fill a panel over the fireplace. The furniture is of mahogany, covered with gay brocades. A profusion of bric-a-brac, chiefly East Indian in character, is scattered about. A large round table, littered with papers, stands slightly to the right of center, with an arm chair on either side of it. On the left, a high-backed "settle." Another table, small and round, stands conveniently near the arm chair drawn up to the fireplace. A harpsichord close to the central arch, and to the left of it.

A brisk fire burns upon the hearth. It is late in the afternoon, and golden sunlight falls through the windows from the right, illuminating the harpsichord, and part of the room.

A sentinel in English uniform occasionally paces to and fro outside of the window.

Colonel Clements, a portly, middle-aged English officer, is seated before the fire, with one leg extended upon another chair, and his feet close to the blaze. Harris, a lean, shrivelled

and nervous amannensis in citizen's dress, is seated at the large table, writing with a quill pen. Mrs. Henderson, a slender woman, who is slightly masculine in appearance and manner, has just entered the door on the left, and is crossing with a tray containing a decanter of wine and a wineglass.

MRS. H. (*sharply*). The servants were busy, so I brought it myself. (*She places the tray on the small table at Clement's elbow, and pours the wine.*)

CLEMENT. You are a model hostess, Mrs. Henderson.

MRS. H. (*with a touch of sarcasm*). Since we *must* shelter soldiers, you are a model guest, Colonel Clement.

CLEMENT (*laughing*). You should have sought the wilderness as we advanced.

MRS. H. (*fussily putting the furniture to rights*). Thanks. I stayed to guard my own. Beside, I prefer Red Coats to redskins.

CLEMENT (*tasting the wine*). Hum—Burgundy. I drink nothing but claret before dinner.

MRS. H. Take a brew of my making. 'Twill cure you in an hour.

CLEMENT. What! Calomel?

MRS. H. No, currant bitters. Then a foot bath and flax seed poultice.

CLEMENT. For what? My bruised knee?

MRS. H. Your gout, of course.

CLEMENT (*with injured dignity*). Gout, Madame? I don't know what gout is. I slipped while dismounting.

MRS. H. (*stubbornly*). 'Tis gout, I say.

CLEMENT (*vexed*). Madame!

(*Mrs. H. seizes the decanter sharply and crosses to the door.*)

MRS. H. I don't know how it is, no one but myself is ever in the right. (*She disappears through the door at left.*)

HARRIS (*mceekly*). Dear me! Our hostess adds a spice to life, doesn't she?

CLEMENT. Hum! I should say sulphur. What were your last words?

HARRIS (*reading from the manuscript on the table before him*). "The troops will reach you before these letters, as my dispatches, of which the enclosed are duplicates, were intercepted by ruffians last Thursday night."

CLEMENT. Hum. (*Dictating*). "I annex a description of Martin's assailants." (*He takes a printed proclamation from the table at his elbow and glances at it, apparently puzzled*). One might almost believe it was he. (*Here he reads a detailed description of Henry Culbertson—height, weight, complexion, etc.*) No, no. It must be a coincidence.

HARRIS. Shall I write that?

CLEMENT. Certainly not. (*Dictating*). "The evident desire of the Rebels"—(*Harris writes*) "to maintain the obstructions on the Delaware"—(*Harris writes*).

(*Lieutenant Devilliers, a tall, stout fellow, sensual and a bully, dressed in English uniform, enters through the window at back.*)

DEVILLIERS. Good e'en, Colonel.

CLEMENT. Ah, Devilliers.

(*Devilliers turns and looks out of the window.*)

DEVILLIERS. Beautiful! Beautiful!

CLEMENT. Devilliers! (*Devilliers turns from the window*). Help me with this confounded report.

DEVILLIERS. I'm on duty, Colonel. (*He again looks out of the window.*) In pursuit of another charmer. A stranger. Yes, she's coming here. As dainty as a bit of Dresden china.

CLEMENT. Which you will straightway proceed to break.

DEVILLIERS (*advancing*). A servant, I think. She cannot harm me.

CLEMENT. But you can harm her.

DEVILLIERS. Pshaw! What matter?

CLEMENT. You think because Lady Devilliers is in London——

DEVILLIERS. My wife? (*Laughing*). She's hardened to my escapades, indeed, rather expects them.

CLEMENT (*regretfully*). Ah, these latter day fashions.

DEVILLIERS (*reading Harris' manuscript*). And what are we writing to our Lord Admiral?

CLEMENT. Of the assault on the dispatch bearer.

DEVILLIERS. Tell him of the social campaign. 'Twill interest him more.

CLEMENT. Lord Howe is not likely to forget the festivities. (*Clement has a spasm of pain in his foot and writhes under it.*) I know I won't.

(*Mary Scattergood is heard arguing with the sentinel outside of the window.*)

MARY S. Let me go in! I must see him, I tell ye. An outrage! Treating an honest woman in this fashion. I will see him! Touch me if ye dare!

(*Mary Scattergood enters through the window. She is a very old woman from the lower walks of life, uses a crutch-cane, and talks rapidly, without inflection or punctuation.*)

MARY S. (*to Devilliers*). Be ye this Colonel Clement?

DEVILLIERS. No, good-wife. Your grievance?

MARY S. I'm going to give this here Colonel Clement a piece of my mind. His soldiers robbing a poor woman's hen-roost. And when I belabored them with my stick they laughed, and one of them tried to kiss me. (*Greatly insulted.*) Think of it! *Kiss me!* But I'll have me money, every farthing of it, or I'll—— (*She sees Clement.*) Be ye this Colonel Clement?

CLEMENT. Um—ah—Colonel Clement is inspecting his regiment—will not return until night.

MARY S. Then here I sit (*she sits decisively by the large table*) until he comes back, and I get my money. I'll show him his blackguards can't rob women's hen-roosts and not pay for what they take. (*She strikes the table with her fist. Harris is greatly frightened.*) I'll have four shillings, six pence—or nothing. Two shillings for my red rooster, a shilling apiece for them three black hens, and sixpence for my trouble. And if he don't pay, I'll sit here forever, or carry this chair away in pawn. (*She repeats the blow on the*

table. Harris is livid with fright, Devilliers convulsed with laughter.)

CLEMENT (*pompously*). Madame, I sympathize deeply with your grievance, and were I Colonel Clement the money should be paid at once. But the only person present authorized to treat is the Colonel's secretary, Mr. Harris. (*He indicates Harris, who is trembling with terror.*)

MARY S. (*to Harris*). You——

HARRIS (*trembling*). I—I——

CLEMENT (*rising*). Will you step into the library, madam? (*He indicates the door on the right.*) Harris, conduct the lady to the library.

(*Harris goes up to the door of that apartment, and opens it.*)

MARY S. (*following Harris*). I won't be put off, I tell ye. (*She disappears into the library, her voice being heard in the distance.*) Two shillings for my red rooster, a shilling apiece for them three hens——

(*Harris closes the door sharply.*)

HARRIS (*anxiously to Clement*). Colonel! *Must I?*

CLEMENT. What? And you a soldier?

HARRIS. I—I forgot that.

CLEMENT. And therefore a brave man.

HARRIS (*opening the library door*). Ye—yes, I am a brave man. (*He goes into the library.*)

(*Devilliers and Clement laugh heartily, the latter walking across the room, with the assistance of a cane.*)

(*Mrs. Henderson appears in the door on the left, carrying a tray of wine, which she places on the table.*)

MRS. H. I've the greatest news, she has arrived at last.

DEVILLIERS. Who?

MRS. H. Another guest for our ball to-night. I'll fetch her, when she smarts herself. You must dance with her Colonel. (*She seizes Clement's hands, and drags him through several dance steps. Clement gasps with pain and sinks into a chair. Mrs. Henderson suddenly repents.*) I forgot. Your foot. Let me rub it for you. (*She makes a motion to seize his foot.*)

CLEMENT (*interfering*). No you don't.

MRS. H. 'Twill do it good, since it's not gout.

DEVILLIERS. But the new arrival?

MRS. H. A beauty. As dainty as a primrose.

CLEMENT (*nursing his foot*). Some women remind me of thistles.

MRS. H. What success, Lieutenant? Will they come to-night?

DEVILLIERS. All but Madame Allen. She declined.

(*Caesar, a negro slave, in livery, appears at the door on left. He mimics the manner of the military, saluting when he speaks and "wheeling" when he walks.*)

MRS. H. I'm glad of it. Dollie Allens' a sharp tongued vixen and a bore.

CAESAR (*announcing*). Madame Dollie Allen, Mr. Sampson.

(*Mrs. Allen and Henry Culbertson enter.*)

MRS. H. (*Running to Mrs. Allen and kissing her effusively*). Dollie! Dearest! What a delightful surprise. Good e'en, Mr. Sampson. (*She curtsies to Henry, who bows. Mrs. Henderson turns to Caesar.*) Caesar, tell Cloe to bring the tea.

(*Caesar salutes and disappears.*)

(*Mrs. Henderson puts her arms around Mrs. Allen's waist and they come down on the right. Mrs. Allen is short and stout, with an aged, faded face, and extremely feminine and precise in her manner. She is dressed girlishly in cherry color and white, with many ribbons and "butterfly" bows. She is not a stage spinster.*)

(*Henry Sampson—Culbertson, the hero—is richly dressed in the height of the fashion. He crosses to Clement and Devilliers on the left.*)

HENRY (*shaking their hands*). Colonel—Lieutenant.

DEVILLIERS (*addressing Henry as an old friend*). Delighted, Harry. How is the rheumatism?

HENRY. Entirely well, thanks, except the hand. (*He indicates his hand, which is bandaged.*) 'Tis still sore.

(The three men partake of snuff.)

MRS. H. *(to Mrs. A.)*. So sorry, sweetheart, you are not coming to-night.

MRS. A. But I am.

MRS. H. You declined.

MRS. A. *(with envenomed sweetness)*. Of course, Sophie, dear. But now I accept—to turn your sorrow into joy.

(Cloe, the negress, has entered on the left, with a tray containing tea and cups. She places them on the harpsichord.)

MRS. H. *(rising and aside)*. Impudent minx! *(She goes up to the harpsichord.)*

MRS. A. *(with great disgust, as Mrs. Henderson leaves her.)* Pah! *(She straightens her ribbons.)*

(Cloe, the negress, is standing military fashion, and salutes as Mrs. Henderson approaches her.)

MRS. H. *(astonished)*. Cloe!

CLOE *(apologetically)*. I ain't doin' nothin', missus. *(She salutes.)*

MRS. H. You're not a soldier.

CLOE. I—I know. But Cæsar says as now de so'jus am so perspicuous, I must learn de military tictacs.

MRS. H. *(indicating the door, left)*. Go.

(Cloe exits, military fashion.)

MRS. H. *(as she pours the tea)*. Tea, Dollie? Tea Colonel?

MRS. A. Harry will bring me mine. *(Henry goes up to Mrs. H. Mrs. Allen crosses to Clement and sits beside him.)* 'Tis such a comfort, Colonel, to have a gallant in attendance. *(Confidentially, to Clement.)* I'm in such a quandary—really losing sleep o' nights.

CLEMENT. Tell me, madame, that I may rescue you.

MRS. A. I'm going to give a ball—not a “small and early,” like Sophie's to-night, but a really grand affair. *Everyone* will be there, but for the life of me I cannot remember all the officers' names.

CLEMENT. There's General Howe——

MRS. A. Of course. And Colonel Knyphausen, and

Major André,—and the tall Captain in the Queen's Rangers,—and the other beau with the Chasseurs,—and,—I can go no farther.

CLEMENT (*after a moment of reflection*). Now that I think of it, I have a complete list of the forces and their commanders. (*He goes to the large table, takes up a folded sheet of blue paper and carries it to Mrs. Allen.*) I shall be happy, Madame, if you make your choice from this. (*He hands the paper to Mrs. Allen.*)

MRS. A. You are an angel. (*She opens the paper and peruses it.*) Dear me! 'Twill take an hour to copy them.

HENRY (*who has approached them with two cups of tea.*) Mrs. Allen,—Colonel, your tea. Perhaps I can copy the list for you.

MRS. A. So like you, Harry dear. (*Turning to Clement.*) If he may?

CLEMENT. Certainly. Certainly. You'll find quills and paper yonder, Harry. (*He indicates the large table.*)

Henry crosses to the table, sits beside it and begins to write.)

MRS. A. (*to Clement, confidentially*). Isn't Harry a most lovable fellow? My heart is quite touched.

CLEMENT (*testily*). So I've heard, madame.

MRS. A. (*laughing, coyly*). There, there. Don't be jealous. I'm not quite vanquished yet. But tell me of your adventures in New York last winter. (*Mrs. Allen and Clement converse in pantomime.*)

MRS. H. (*who has been conversing with Devilliers near the window*). Have you heard, Dollie? General Howe has confiscated Katie Pemberton's coach and dapple grays. (*To Devilliers.*) She does not hear me.

DEVILLIERS. I've used that as an argument to get Harry's horse.

HENRY (*as he writes*). I would not part with him for ten others. The beast is like an old friend.

DEVILLIERS. If you won't sell, I'll confiscate.

HENRY. Too late. I heard of Mrs. Pemberton's loss, and sent my horse to Whitemarsh.

MRS. H. You're worsted, Lieutenant. Have another cup for consolation. (*She pours tea for Devilliers.*)

(*Henry rises from the table with two papers in his hands, the original blue list and a copy of it on white paper. He looks intently toward Devilliers, then at Clement, hesitates a moment and finally crosses to Mrs. Allen and Clement.*)

CLEMENT (*to Mrs. Allen*). Your cup is empty. Let me get some more.

MRS. A. (*giving Clement her cup*). Thanks. But first tell me how the story ended. What is the appearance of these spies?

CLEMENT. Quite commonplace. (*Indicating.*) Devilliers, Sampson, or myself.

MRS. A. I fancied them mysterious rascals in cloaks, big hats and faces like sour pippins. (*With imitative grimace.*)

CLEMENT. Nathan Hale was quite genteel—a school-master, I believe.

MRS. A. And his end?

CLEMENT. We hanged him in the orchard next sun-up.

MRS. A. (*sadly*). Poor wretch.

HENRY (*who has approached them unobserved*). A spy deserves to be hung—when you catch him.

MRS. A. Still, they are men.

CLEMENT. Nothing of the sort, madame—foxes, in human shape.

HENRY. A spy is a huntsman who pursues victims less intelligent than himself. (*He hands the white paper to Mrs. Allen.*) Your copy, Mrs. Allen. (*Henry turns to Clement, indicating the blue paper.*) And the original?

CLEMENT. Destroy it. (*He rises.*) 'Tis a dangerous thing to have about. (*He goes up to Mrs. Henderson with the teacups. She refills them.*)

(*Henry slowly crosses to the right, looking at the blue paper, which he slowly folds up. He pauses near the side of the large table, with his face to the audience, slips the blue paper into his*

bosom, and takes a sheet of white paper from the table. This he tears into small pieces as he approaches the fireplace. As he turns to go toward the mantel, he looks intently toward Mrs. Henderson, Devilliers and Clement, by the harpsichord. The two officers are watching Mrs. Henderson pour tea and have not perceived his ruse. He then looks toward Mrs. Allen, who has seen his action and is looking at him with startled surprise. Henry, with a quick movement, casts the fragments of paper into the fire, and raises his finger to his lips with a warning gesture to Mrs. Allen. Clement turns and advances to Mrs. Allen with her teacup. Henry drops his hand and leans idly upon the mantel.)

CLEMENT (to Henry). You destroyed it, Harry?

HENRY (pointing to the fire). See! 'Tis ashes and smoke.

(A disturbance is heard in the library. Harris appears in the door of the apartment, greatly dishevelled, and followed by Mary Scattergood, who belabors him with her crutch.)

MARY S. Take that! And that! I'll not be deceived, I tell ye.

(Henry intercepts Mary Scattergood. Harris crouches behind the table in terror.)

MARY S. (greatly surprised). Mr. Sampson?

HENRY (to the others). The landlady at my lodgings.

MARY S. You'll help me, I know ye will. 'Tis about the looting of my hen-roost, last Thursday night, when you were in the woods.

MRS. A. (surprised, and aside). Thursday? In the woods?

HENRY (anxiously, and pushing Mary Scattergood toward the window). Yes, yes, I remember; and more, I'll see that you get your money. Believe me. Go—go.

MARY S. (at the window, and brandishing her crutch toward Harris). This time 'twas my crutch. Next time, I'll bring a gun. (She disappears through the window.)

(All laugh except Harris and Mrs. Allen, who watches Henry with severity.)

HARRIS. The library is a wreck.

MRS. H. (*enraged*). Oh ! this is dreadful.

CLEMENT (*conciliating her*). Nay, 'tis nothing.

MRS. H. Nothing? My furniture?

DEVILLIERS (*mimicking Mary Scattergood*) My rooster?

HARRIS (*rubbing his back*). My back? (*He exits into the library.*)

MRS. A. (*to Henry, with severity*). My confidence, Mr. Sampson.

(*The others turn to her in surprise. Mrs. Allen speaks to Henry.*)

MRS. A. You told me you were ill with rheumatism Thursday night. This creature says you were absent in the woods.

HENRY (*after a moment of embarrassed silence*). I told an untruth.

CLEMENT. What's this? A white lie?

HENRY (*hesitating slightly, but very calm*). 'Twas an affair of honor.

MRS. A. A duel?

DEVILLIERS. We've heard no such gossip.

HENRY. A matter—in which—I respected the bond of secrecy demanded by my assailant.

CLEMENT. Spoken like a gentleman.

MRS. H. What was it about? A woman, of course.

HENRY. It arose from my love for—(*he hesitates*).

MRS. A. (*going to Henry and putting her arm through his, affectionately*). Say no more, Henry dear. It was that nasty Colonel Saunders, who said of me——

MRS. H. (*interrupting, maliciously*). That he made war with gun powder, you with face powder.

MRS. A. (*to Henry*). And you avenged me? Oh, how sweet. And your poor hand is wounded, not rheumatic?

HENRY. Yes. 'Tis a wound. (*He leaves her.*)

MRS. A. (*wiping her eyes*). And I admire you the more for it, dear. (*She turns to Clement.*) This is quite irresistible. (*Caesar appears in the door on the left. He salutes.*)

CAESAR. Miss' Henderson, dat young lady am in de hall, and says——

MRS. H. Shameful! I quite forgot her. (*She goes to the door and calls.*) Come in here, dear. (*She then turns to the company.*) Let me introduce my niece.

(*Ruth Weldin appears in the doorway. She still wears her Quaker garb. Henry, who has seen her through the open door, turns his back to her, and seems to be looking at papers on the table.*)

DEVILLIERS (*aside, to Clement*). My Dresden china.

MRS. H. (*introducing Ruth*). Mrs. Allen, Colonel Clement, Lieutenant Devilliers. (*Devilliers kisses Ruth's hand.*)

CLEMENT (*to Ruth*). Lieutenant Devilliers already worships at your shrine, Mistress.

(*Ruth slowly withdraws her hand from Devilliers'. She is looking toward Henry.*)

RUTH. And this gentlemen? (*Sarcastically.*) There is something familiar about—his back.

(*Henry slowly turns to Ruth, who starts back in great surprise.*)

RUTH. Mr. Culbertson!

CLEMENT. No, Sampson.

MRS. H. You know him?

RUTH (*joyfully going toward Henry, with outstretched hands*). Know him? Is he not my best friend? 'Twas but last Thursday I met him—— (*Her words and action are suspended by the lack of recognition on Henry's part.*)

HENRY (*coldly*). I have not the pleasure of the lady's acquaintance.

RUTH (*puzzled*). Surely—you were at Valley Forge?

DEVILLIERS. Impossible! (*He places his hand on Clement's arm, with a look of suspicious inquiry.*)

HENRY (*to Ruth*). I have never been in Valley Forge, mistress.

MRS. A. How could he be there? Mr. Sampson was arranging a duel over me.

RUTH (*to Henry*). You acted like a Tory—the Rebel colonel arrested, searched, cross-questioned you. I helped you escape—bandaged your hand with my kerchief. See, 'tis wounded.

HENRY (*lightly*). Scratched in the duel this lady speaks of.

CLEMENT (*gaily*). A coincidence, that is all. Such cases frequently happen. I knew two men once so much alike that—but no matter.

HENRY (*Laughing, and making a desperate effort to seem light-hearted*). Precisely. What a tale for the mess, Lieutenant. 'Twill out-thrill the story books. Behold Dromio of Ephesus, in rags at—what is the name of the place? Ah yes, Vallet's Forge—intriguing with a pretty Quaker Dulcinea, who makes love, perhaps, bandages his hand, gets him out of hot water, in short, champions her bold knight as did fair damosels in the days, when—such things were the fashion. (*laughing with others.*) And here—at the same day, hour and moment, Dromio of Syracuse—or Germantown—sits in your drawing-room, dances at your routs, drinks tea, spars with compliments. (*Laughs*). Impossible, is it not?

CLEMENT (*to Ruth*). The only explanation.

(*Henry turns down the stage at right, his face distorted with pain. Mrs. Allen seizes his arm, anxiously.*)

HENRY (*whispering to Mrs. Allen*). Get me out of this. I burn in Hell's fire.

MRS. A. (*laughing*). Yes! Yes! Very true. (*Crossing to Ruth.*) You must be convinced of your mistake now. (*Ruth gazes at Mrs. Allen with instinctive jealousy, and turns from her. Mrs. Allen approaches the window.*) Dear me, dusk is falling. I'll not have time to dress for dinner.

(*Henry follows her toward the window.*)

CLEMENT. You'll come to the ball, Harry?

HENRY (*hesitating*). I—

DEVILLIERS (*with meaning*). Nay, Sampson. You must.

MRS. A. (*at the window*). Of course he will. Hurry, Harry dear. Do you know what dressing means?

HENRY. (*pausing before Ruth*). If I have pained you, mistress——

RUTH (*coldly*). I—now I know you are not he.

HENRY. Then as a stranger.

RUTH. Yes. A stranger——

HENRY. Let me hope I may prove worthy of this other, whom you picture in your thoughts.

MRS. A. Will you *never* come? I'm going. (*She exits through the window.*)

HENRY (*gaily*). See, Colonel, what it means to be a beau. (*He has reached the window, and bows and doffs his hat with elaborate ceremony*). Mrs. Henderson—Colonel—Lieutenant—(*He gazes a moment toward Ruth in regretful farewell and exits through the window.*)

RUTH. Oh! Oh! (*She turns quickly toward the window.*) They are like lovers.

MRS. H. Lovers? (*Laughing.*) I should say so.

CLEMENT. As good as betrothed.

RUTH. But who is he?

MRS. H. Mr. Sampson? No one knows exactly. A young Royalist from Virginia—the protegee and suitor of Dollie Allen——

CLEMENT. A fearless whip—reckless at cards—an excellent dancer——

RUTH (*jealously*). Her suitor—her suitor——

MRS. H. Why dwell upon it Ruth? (*Fondly.*) Come to my room—I have the bravest frock for you to-night.

(*Ruth turns to Mrs. Henderson, then runs to her arms as if for comfort and protection.*)

RUTH. Dear aunt! Dear aunt!

MRS. H. (*caressing Ruth.*) Poor child. You are fatigued, travel-worn, distraught. Come.

(*Mrs. Henderson and Ruth exeunt on the left.*)

(*As the door closes behind them, Clement turns sharply to Devilliers.*)

CLEMENT (*anxiously*). Lieutenant!

DEVILLIERS (*carelessly*). Colonel?

CLEMENT. If Sampson should be——?

DEVILLERS. An ugly thought, an ugly word, you admit 'twas a coincidence.

CLEMENT. But *three* coincidences!

DEVILLIERS (*surprised*). Three?

CLEMENT. The lie about his absence——

DEVILLIERS. And the recognition by this maid. That's two.

CLEMENT (*advancing to fireplace*). Read the proclamation describing Martin's assailant. (*He sits before the fireplace.*) (*Devilliers takes the proclamation from the table and reads.*)

DEVILLIERS. "The man who acted as leader in the assault was——" (*Here follow with a detailed description of Henry's appearance.*) Marvellously alike! What do you propose? Arrest him?

CLEMENT. Not so fast. He might prove an alibi, make us the laughing stock of the camp.

DEVILLIERS. But stand idle?

CLEMENT. Far from it. (*He stirs among the ashes of the fireplace with his cane.*) First make sure, and meanwhile allay suspicion. Call Harris, will you? (*Devilliers strikes a Chinese gong on the table.*) In other words, with every item of proof, Sampson must receive a fresh assurance of his safety. (*Harris enters from the library.*)

CLEMENT. (*speaking with his eyes intent upon the fireplace*). Tell Captain Delancey to detail three of his agents to investigate Henry Sampson's movements for the past fortnight. They must be thorough, expeditious, but above all secret. I want a report to-night. Go. (*Harris exits quickly. Clement picks several fragments of partly burned paper out of the fireplace.*) Hum!

DEVILLIERS. A fourth coincidence.

CLEMENT. No, a certainty. The list of troops was on blue paper. The fragments he burned were white—and blank.

DEVILLIERS. You still hesitate?

CLEMENT (*putting the fragments of paper in his pocket*). Yes, until Delancey reports. Go to the Provost. Tell him to keep Sampson under constant surveillance. If he attempts to leave the camp, arrest him. (*Devolliers, seizing his hat and cloak, starts for the window. Clement detains him.*) Stop at his lodgings. Pay his hostess doubly for the poultry. Learn from her all you can.

(*Devolliers salutes and exits through the window.*)

CLEMENT (*after a moment of reflection*). What did he say? "A spy is a huntsman who pursues victims less intelligent than himself." Hum! We'll see who is the less intelligent, my young friend.

(*The dusk has gradually fallen and the room is now enshrouded in gloom.*)

(*Caesar enters on the left, with a lighted taper.*)

CAESAR. Dinner am ready, sah.

CLEMENT. I come at once.

(*Clement crosses. As he does so, Cloe enters also bearing a taper. She salutes as Clement passes her and exits.*)

CAESAR. Considerin' de time I hab learned yo', Cleopatra, you does de tictacs remarkably well.

CLOE. Go long, you black niggah.

(*During the following, Caesar prepares the room for the dance, pushing the furniture back against the walls, arranging the chairs in rows, rolling up the rug, etc. Cloe lights candelabra and tapers in wall sconces, and finally mounts upon a chair to kindle the candles in the chandelier at the center of the apartment.*)

CAESAR. Say, Cloe, does you know what Miss' Chews' Penelope tol' me?

CLOE. Don' com aroun' telling you' ole wife what dese yere black wenches say. I's entitled to more respect'.

CAESAR. Oh, dis ain't nothin'.

CLOE. Well, what she say?

CAESAR. I ain't go'in ter tell you now.

CLOE. Come 'long. I'se jest foolin'.

CAESAR (*in a voice of awe*). Well, Penelope says, says she, dat a niggah from up de country tol' her, dat dis yere General Washingboard——

CLOE. Washingtawn. Think of scrubbin' Germantown.

CAESAR. Don't try none of you' book larnin' on me, Cleopatra Henderson.

CLOE. Go 'long! What dis yere niggah from up de country say?

CAESAR. Dat dis yere General Scrubbing Germantown.

CLOE. Washingtawn.

CAESAR (*angrily*). Dis yere General What-yo'call-him and his so'jus—(*with a voice of awe*)—ate—black—niggahs.

CLOE (*greatly frightened*). Lo'd help us!

CAESAR (*grinning*). An' thought niggah meat mos' as good as roast beef.

CLOE (*who is sceptical*). Den why didn't dey eat dis up-country niggah?

CAESAR. Oh, he's a conjurer, he is. If dey comes here——

(*Cloe approaches Caesar with determination.*)

CLOE (*grasping his arm*). Say you Caesar Henderson, jes' you gibe me you' witch charm dis instant.

CAESAR. I wants it myself.

CLOE. So do I. (*She shakes him.*) Am I you' true an' lawful wife, or ain't I? (*Shaking him.*)

CAESAR. Of co's you is, honey. (*Cloe shakes him.*) *He takes the charm from his pocket and gives it to her, then is suddenly seized with a great fear.* But ef dey catches me first?

CLOE. 'Ain't we married? Derefore one? It'll do for both.

SENTINEL (*outside of the window*). Who goes there? (*Cloe runs up to the window and peeps out.*)

CLOE. Foh de Lord! Dere's a man acomin' in heah. (*Henry enters quickly through the window.*)

HENRY (*to Cloe*). Ask Miss Weldin to see me—at once. (*He gives Cloe money.*) The others need not know.

CLOE (*saluting*). Yes sah—I mean, no sah. (*She exits on the left.*)

(*Henry goes to the fireplace and stirs amongst the ashes.*)

HENRY (*with a sigh of relief*). Completely burned.

CAESAR (*advancing*). Did you lose anything, sah?

HENRY (*gaily*). Nothing. Nothing. (*He gives money to Caesar.*) Find Cloe. Tell her to put this with my other keepsake. Go!

(*Caesar pockets the money, then bows almost to the ground.*)

CAESAR. I always knows you was a gentleman (*grinning*).
Yes, sah (*crossing*). Yes, sah. (*He exits on the left, saluting.*)
(*As Caesar crosses, Ruth enters on left, and advances. Henry goes to meet her.*)

HENRY (*gaily*). My excuse for this intrusion——

RUTH (*coldly*). Is my mistake in your identity?

(*Henry takes from his pocket Ruth's handkerchief, used in Act 1, and hands it to her.*)

HENRY. Is to return this. (*Smiling, he watches Ruth's face.*)

RUTH (*glancing at the handkerchief, then into Henry's face, and taking a step toward him.*) Henry! (*She stops, gazes again at the handkerchief, her expression changing to one of doubt, then coldness and anger.*)

HENRY. Ruth?

RUTH. Your denial of a moment since? (*She hesitates.*)
It was——

HENRY (*bravely*). I lied.

RUTH (*looking at the handkerchief with rising anger*). As I wound this about your hand but yester-night, I thought you true and noble—I gazed into your face as that of the man I loved—mine only, and only mine——

HENRY. Hush. (*He glances nervously about him.*) We must still seem as strangers.

RUTH. Oh, I know! I know! (*She throws the handkerchief petulantly from her.*) Still strangers! For the best of reasons.

HENRY. I cannot explain.

RUTH (*very angry*). You need not! You need not! Explanations are written in every action. You thought I would not meet you here—see you the suitor, the accepted lover of another woman.

HENRY (*in agony*). Ruth! No! No!

RUTH (*fiercely*). This—Mrs. Allen?

HENRY. Have you so little faith?

RUTH. Prove *your* faith. Deny her before them all—if you can. (*She pauses, Henry is silent.*) It is the truth!

HENRY. Listen, Ruth. I love none but you.

RUTH. No other woman?

HENRY. None but you.

RUTH. You love me before all else in the world—even life itself?

HENRY (*after a moment of hesitation, and sadly*). No, there is another love, before which all else is sacrificed, even life itself. Beside this other, your cruel words, your taunts, your friendship,—even your love are as naught.

RUTH. You break my heart. (*Burying her face in her hands, she throws herself upon the settle.*)

HENRY (*tenderly, and approaching her*). Some day you will know, it cannot be now. But believe me—oh, think of me as your lover still. One who, entangled in the meshes of Fate, must do all, suffer all for a great end. This other is a thing apart from my love for you. Neither can change. Both are as fixed as the firmament.

RUTH. Set my heart at rest. Tell me your secret?

HENRY (*after a moment of hesitation*). I must be silent. (*A slight pause.*) Within the hour I leave Germantown, perhaps never to return. I came to ask, for the sake of our old friendship—of my love—to live as if they had never been. Deny our meeting—if you value my life.

RUTH. Deny this other, if you value my love.

HENRY. I cannot. I *will* not.

RUTH. You kill my love. Give me back the talisman.

HENRY (*taking his coin and chain from his bosom, and extending it toward her*). Oh, feeble love! (*Ruth rises and*

turns as if to take it, but Henry replaces the trinket resolutely in his bosom). No, you shall not, until you know.

RUTH (*angrily*). Coward ! Farewell. (*She rushes off at the left*).

HENRY (*looking after her, sadly*). Farewell, beloved.

(*Henry turns up to the window, and is confronted by Devilliers, who is standing between the curtains. Henry is taken completely by surprise, and shows his anxiety during the following*).

DEVILLIERS. I congratulate you, Harry.

HENRY. Upon what ?

DEVILLIERS. The quick journey you made (*hesitates slightly*) in returning for dinner. (*Advancing, he sees the handkerchief Ruth has thrown aside. He picks it up.*) A lady's kerchief ? (*Looks in the corner of the handkerchief*) " R. W." Ah, it belongs to Mistress Ruth. (*gaily*) A charming little maid, Harry. I'm head over heels in love already.

HENRY (*in desperation*). I—I do not know her.

DEVILLIERS. Of course not. Else I shouldn't be so frank. (*Looking at the handkerchief.*) What's this ? Blood ? Ah ! Very interesting. (*He looks at Henry searchingly*).

HENRY (*approaching Devilliers with the boldness of despair*). What do you mean ?

DEVILLIERS (*laughing*). Nothing. What ails you ? Come, a glass of wine with the ladies.

HENRY (*approaching the window*). I'll take the air.

DEVILLIERS (*intercepting him*). Come with me.

(*Devilliers' words are fraught with significance, and after a quick look into his face, Henry shrugs his shoulders and obeys. They approach the door on the left, when Mrs. Henderson enters in a ball dress, closely followed by Cæsar, who carries a fiddle. Clement brings up the rear.*)

MRS. H. (*as she enters*). " The Soldier's Peril ? " Certainly I'll play it, Colonel, if I can find the music. (*She goes to the harpsichord.*)

CLEMENT. It makes a capital minuet.

MRS. H. Do you know it, Cæsar ?

CAESAR (*tuning the fiddle*). I plays mos' eberything, Missus.

CLEMENT (*shaking hands with Henry*). Ah, Harry, glad you won't disappoint us. Completely recovered from your adventure with Mistress Ruth?

HENRY (*laughing*). Absurd, was it not? (*He watches Clement, doubtfully.*)

CLEMENT. I knew at once it could not be you.

MRS. H. Pshaw! (*looking about her*). Where is that music?

CLEMENT (*to Henry, patting him playfully on the back*). A lady in distress. Let us to the rescue.

(*Clement and Henry join Mrs. Henderson at the harpsichord. Devilliers has gone to the fireplace.*)

MRS. H. Here it is. (*She sits at the harpsichord.*) If you'll hold it in place, Mr. Sampson. (*Henry arranges the music on the rack of the harpsichord. Mr. Henderson begins to play.*)

MRS. H. Now listen, Caesar.

CAESAR. Yes, um.

(*Clement has approached Devilliers at the fireplace. They converse in pantomime, watching Henry furtively.*)

CLEMENT. Wait till Delancey reports. In the meantime, he must not leave our sight.

(*A door knocker sounds in the distance on the left.*)

MRS. H. (*rising from the harpsichord*). The guests! Run, Caesar. Quickly.

(*As Caesar approaches the door on the left, Cloe enters, walking backward, and speaking to Ruth, outside.*)

CLOE. Jes' come right in, Miss Ruth.

RUTH (*outside the door*). But I can't get in.

MRS. H. Try it backwards, Ruth, dear.

(*Ruth enters backwards, because of the large hoop of the elaborate ball dress she wears. Her hair is arranged in a towering head-dress, wound with pearls and a wreath of roses.*)

MRS. H. (*surveying Ruth*). Beautiful! Beautiful!

RUTH (*turning around*). I feel like a balloon.

MRS. H. The latest fashion in London, my dear.

CLEMENT. The head-dress, too.

RUTH. Like a head cheese.

(The guests begin to arrive. They include civilians and women in gay apparel, and soldiers in uniform. They bow or curtsy to Mrs. Henderson in the background. Henry stands besides Mrs. Henderson, Clement keeps him under surveillance. Mrs. Allen enters and salutes Mrs. Henderson.)

(Devilliers advances with Ruth.)

DEVILLIERS. Before I left London, I saw Queen Charlotte in such a dress.

RUTH *(laughing)*. Compare me with royalty?

DEVILLIERS. There is no comparison. You are more beautiful.

RUTH. Oh! *(She turns from him embarrassed, tries to take a seat, but the hoops spring up in front. With a cry, she rises.)*

DEVILLIERS. Her Royal Highness——

RUTH *(vexed)*. Never sits, I suppose.

DEVILLIERS. You should take it thus. *(He approaches very close to her and takes hold of her dress.)*

RUTH *(tapping his hand angrily with her fan until he releases the garment)*. I prefer to stand.

DEVILLIERS *(apologetically)*. A reasonable courtesy, Mistress. *(Whispering fondly)*. And very sweet.

RUTH *(laughing)*. You would have me believe——?

DEVILLIERS. It comes from my heart of hearts.

RUTH. And mine is arrow proof.

DEVILLIERS. In war resistance makes men fight more persistently.

RUTH. In war, perhaps; but not in love.

DEVILLERS. Love is war.

(Ruth's attention has been attracted by a group on the opposite side of the room, consisting of Mrs. Allen, Henry and Clement. Ruth observes them jealously, then turns to Devilliers and encourages his love making.)

RUTH (*gaily*). And you besiege a woman's heart, knowing full well that, sooner or later, she must surrender?

DEVILLIERS. Then you are *not* arrow-proof?

RUTH. Am I not a woman? (*She gives Devilliers her hand. He courts her in pantomime.*)

MRS. A. (*to Clement*). My friendship for Henry? 'Tis easily explained. He is a brave man, Colonel, the brave son of my schoolmate, my dearest friend. How warm it is here, close by the fire. My fan. (*She looks about for her fan.*) Pshaw, I left it on the harpsichord. Will you get it, Colonel?

CLEMENT (*rising*). With pleasure. (*He starts to go toward the harpsichord, then attracts Devilliers' attention, and motions him to watch Henry. Devilliers nods in assent. Clement goes to the harpsichord.*)

MRS. A. (*in an undertone to Henry*). Why did you not go at once?

HENRY. And endanger you as well as myself? No, I will elude them during the dance.

MRS. A. Dear boy, adieu. My prayers go with you. (*Mrs. Henderson advances, bustling among the guests.*)

MRS. H. We're all here now. Come! Come! Choose your partners. Ruth, you will dance with Lieutenant Devilliers—Dollie Allen——

MRS. A. Thank you, no, Sophie dear.

(*Ruth and Devilliers take their positions for the dance. The other guests have done so, standing in a double row down the center of the stage, the men on one side, the women on the other. The dance begins, music being furnished by Mrs. Henderson, at the harpsichord, and Caesar, with his fiddle. The dance is a lively "Virginia Reel."*)

(*Devilliers and Clement, the latter on the left, do not take their eyes from Henry, who, during the dance, bids farewell to Mrs. Allen, kisses her hand, then strolls up the room, conversing with several "sitters out."*)

(*Cloc enters on the left, and whispers a message to Clement. He rises.*)

CLEMENT. Pardon, ladies and gentlemen. Lieutenant Devilliers is summoned. (*Whispering to Devilliers.*) Delancey!

DEVILLIERS. (*Turning to the dancers.*) A thousand excuses. It is unavoidable. (*He exits quickly on the left.*)

MRS. H. But break up the dance?

CLEMENT. Madame, if my poor services will suffice? (*He moves toward the dancers, then winces with pain.*) I forget. My injured knee.

MRS. H. (*rising from the harpsichord.*) This is a shame.

CLEMENT (*turning to Henry, who has reached the window.*) Here is Harry Sampson—a good dancer without a partner.

HENRY. If I may decline——

MRS. H. I will not hear of it.

SEVERAL WOMEN. Oh, yes! Dance! Do! Please! (*Henry advances and takes Devilliers' place. The dance proceeds.*)

(*Devilliers enters quickly with a paper in his hand. He says a word excitedly to Clement.*)

CLEMENT (*springing to his feet.*) Arrest him.

(*Devilliers seizes Henry, who throws him off and makes a dash toward the window. Several men seize him. The dancers are thrown into confusion.*)

SEVERAL WOMEN. An arrest?

RUTH. For what?

DEVILLERS. He is a Rebel spy.

ALL. A spy?

RUTH. A spy? A spy! (*She staggers slightly, then holds out her hands and takes a step toward Henry, appealingly. Her action is arrested, as, with a scream, she falls upon the floor at his feet.*)

END OF SECOND ACT.

THE THIRD ACT.

Mrs. Henderson's garden. The same night. This old-fashioned enclosure is a verdant, retired spot, in which riotous nature has made a conquest over man's efforts at primness and regularity. The box-bordered walks and formal horticultural designs, that were the fashion of the time, are overgrown with a wild tangle of vines and blossoms. Trees and shrubberies form dense screens on either hand. On the left an open, gravelled space, forming part of a circle, with a sun-dial in the centre. To the left of this a bench, beneath the canopy of a weeping willow-tree. Back of the gravelled semi-circle, several rude steps of unwrought stones carry a path up to and through an arch-like arbor, thickly covered with wild grape vines. Box hedges border the semi-circle and the path that extends from it across the garden to an entrance on the right, approached by two more stone steps. On the right, near the center, another tree with a garden seat beneath it. Passing through the arbor the path leads back among the shrubberies to another entrance near the upper right-hand corner of the enclosure. The intervening spaces are filled with foliage and blossoms. The garden lies on the edge of a sharp declivity, so that, as one gazes beyond it, the prospect ends in an expanse of sky, luminous with the moonbeams and stars. Among the flowers blooming by the gravelled semi-circle is a yellow acacia. The moonlight finds its way through the foliage from the right, falling in mottled patches of brilliance.

As the scene is disclosed, Ruth and Devilliers are seen advancing through the arbor. The girl still wears her ball dress, and seems excited and distraught:

RUTH. 'Twas nothing. The night air will revive me.

DEVILLIERS. Strange that you should be overcome.

RUTH. The excitement, surprise, horror of an arrest. You took him——?

DEVILLIERS. He should be at the jail by this time.

RUTH. Sampson is not a spy. I'm sure of it.

DEVILLIERS. Our proofs are absolute. His absence at Valley Forge——

RUTH. It may not have been he.

DEVILLIERS. He stole the list of troops.

RUTH. 'Tis easy to explain. Is he not an honest man?

DEVILLIERS. Bah! A scoundrel as desperate as his cause.

RUTH. Be merciful! What would it mean to *you*, were you in his place?

DEVILLIERS (*laughing*). Impossible!

RUTH. Is he not your brother,—sprung from the same race,—the same blood in your veins,—you and he?

DEVILLIERS. Pshaw! What care I? War is my trade. Small matter whom I fight, if there are enemies to vanquish,—and kill.

RUTH (*after a sigh*). And his fate?

DEVILLIERS. But one end awaits a spy.

RUTH (*looking into his face anxiously*). Death? (*Devilliers nods.*) Oh, horrible! (*She withdraws from him, very sadly.*)

(*A distant shout is heard, followed by others, in rapid succession. Ruth turns to Devilliers in anxious inquiry.*)

RUTH. What is that?

DEVILLIERS. Soldiers, carousing among themselves. (*Gaily.*) Come, let us forget,—or remember only our happiness.

RUTH. *My* happiness?

DEVILLIERS. I am *very* happy,—(*significantly,*)—being near you.

RUTH. You can be happy——

DEVILLIERS. When woman is nigh. Where else do men find Heaven upon earth? (*He describes Ruth during the following sentences, although Ruth does not seem to appreciate the personal application of his words, and stands, turned partly from him, idly plucking the blossoms of the acacia.*) In her is all beauty, appeals to every sense,—the glory of her hair, redolent with a faint perfume, the satin cheek, the lips,

—an everlasting invitation,—the rounded arm, the heaving bosom, sweet as the blossoms she is placing there.

RUTH (*looking at the acacia, pensively*). Golden acacia? Wet with the dew, that has heightened its fragrance.

DEVILLIERS. As woman's tears add to her beauty. They remind me of home, mistress.

RUTH (*softly*). Home?

DEVILLIERS. I see an old garden, like this,—trim walks, arbors, a dial, and, on a sunny bench, an ancient dame nursing a little child, telling him fairy tales, conning the names of flowers, teaching him their language. "This yellow acacia," says she, "is symbol of a secret love."

RUTH. Because 'tis sweet. (*She buries her face in the acacia blossoms.*)

DEVILLIERS. As secret love.

RUTH (*dreamily*). Yes, sweet as secret love,—(*butterfly*) until the awakening.

DEVILLIERS. Need there be awakening? Once love is gained, 'tis for all time.

RUTH. No, no,—'till the awakening.

DEVILLIERS (*with the air of a lover*). Oh, could those blossoms cast a magic spell,—keep warm your heart for one who——

RUTH. Denied me.

DEVILLIERS. Nay—he speaks——

RUTH. Words—words. And what are words? The lover seems a hero, an image cherished for years in woman's heart. He comes, her soul leaps with ecstasy, he whispers soft nothings, thrills with a touch, a kiss, a glance,—searches, searches, with eyes that utter more than lips, into her heart of hearts, and there he reads, she knows not how, that she is his. (*Sadly.*) And then? Too late she learns that he's not her's alone, that there's another, dearer than herself. Too late! Too late! (*She gazes at the acacia in her hand.*) Acacia? Secret love? Nay, let me weave marigold with this—for jealousy. And yew, for my despair. (*She flings the acacia blossoms from her.*)

DEVILLIERS. Jealousy? Despair? This is eternal love, the heart is undefiled. Oh, mistress, mine are not hollow words,——

RUTH (*turning to him in surprise*). You?

DEVILLIERS. Is not mine that love?

RUTH. I meant not—— Forgive me. I knew not your intent.

DEVILLIERS. You led me to believe——

RUTH. At first, perhaps. If you knew why, you would forgive. I never let you hope. (*After a slight pause.*) I cannot love you. (*She leaves him.*)

DEVILLIERS (*following her*). Love need not wait on acquiescence.

RUTH. No. No. It is impossible. (*She turns upon him sharply.*) Think of the barriers—you, a stranger in this land——

DEVILLIERS. A trifle. (*He approaches her.*)

RUTH. Your ties across seas—a sweetheart, a wife perhaps.

DEVILLIERS. A wife? No, I come empty-handed. My love's for you,—alone. (*He seizes her hand.*)

RUTH. (*Withdrawing her hand.*) You came to fight, not find a wife.

DEVILLIERS. Did not Mars love?

RUTH. A truce, I implore you.

DEVILLIERS. I'll take nought but surrender. (*He again approaches her; she evades him.*)

CLOE. (*Calling in the distance, on the right.*) Miss Ruth! Miss Ruth!

RUTH (*calling*). Cloe! Here!

(*Cloe enters on the right, running and greatly excited.*)

CLOE. Oh, oh, Miss Ruth. Come to de house—you'll be shot. (*She gasps for breath. Distant shouts are heard.*) Dey're comin' down de street, running an' yellin'. (*Gasping for breath.*)

DEVILLIERS (*greatly excited*). An attack? (*Cloe at-*

tempts to speak, as she gasps for breath. Devilliers seizes her roughly by the arm.) Tell me !

CLOE. I—I can't jest say. Dey're yellin' de name of this yere Sampson——

RUTH. Sampson ?

(Distant shouts are heard.)

(Sergeant O'Leary enters on the right. He is an Irishman and speaks with a brogue.)

O'LEARY *(to Devilliers)*. Lieutenant ! Sampson has escaped !

RUTH *(with great joy)*. Escaped ?

DEVILLIERS. Where ? How ? Quickly, man !

O'LEARY. Passing the meeting-house, he turned upon us, seized a gun, fought like mad, leaped the graveyard wall. Carey is dead, I think—and——

DEVILLIERS. Which way did he go ?

O'LEARY. I know not.

DEVILLIERS *(to Ruth)*. I must join them, mistress. At some time to come——

RUTH *(with exaltation)*. No ! 'Tis not a truce, but a victory. I will never consent.

(Devilliers looks at her a moment, then smiles bitterly.)

DEVILLIERS. We shall see ! *(To O'Leary.)* Come.

(Devilliers and O'Leary hurry off on the right.)

CLOE *(throwing her arms around Ruth's waist and looking nervously on either hand)*. Oh, Miss Ruth, I'se so scared.

RUTH *(happily)*. He has escaped.

CLOE. Dat's jest it. Do you think he'll come heah ?

RUTH *(with sudden joy)*. Here ? *(Then sadly.)* No he'll go to the North, toward the outposts.

CLOE. 'Cause if he comes heah dere's no tellin' what might happen. I'se most awful afraid of Rebels.

RUTH *(crossing to the left)*. Why ? He won't eat you.

CLOE. I ain't so shuh of dat.

(Henry appears among the shrubberies on the left, flings his chain and talisman in front of Ruth and disappears im-

mediately among the verdure. Ruth, with a cry, kneels and picks up the talisman, looking toward the shrubberies.)

CLOE. What's dat?

RUTH (*dissembling*). I dropped my locket. (*She rises, kissing the talisman with emotion.*)

(*Mrs. Allen enters quickly on the right.*)

MRS. ALLEN. Miss Ruth! Come! The searchers are nearing the house.

RUTH (*coldly*). I thank you. (*She turns to Cloe.*) Let us go. But presently I will return. (*She is gazing toward the shrubberies where Henry stands concealed.*) I will return. (*She passes with Cloe through the arbor and across to the right, disappearing among the shrubberies. As she retires Ruth sings the love verses used in Act I.*)

MRS. A. (*watching them as they go*). The hussy! Almost as impudent as her aunt. She deserves the penalty of insolence—a birch stick at the whipping-post.

(*Henry advances from the shrubberies, disclosing himself to Mrs. Allen.*)

MRS. A. (*in alarm*). Henry!

HENRY. Hush.

MRS. A. This terrible danger.

HENRY. I know——

MRS. A. Go.

HENRY. I must explain.

MRS. A. No time for explanations. The pursuers are too near.

HENRY. I could not go until *she* knew, this woman I love.

MRS. A. (*pensively, and turning from him*). Does she not know?

HENRY. Too little, and too much. I sacrificed her love. She now knows why. But I seemed to claim the affections of another. That must be explained—forgiven.

MRS. A. I do not understand.

HENRY. I trust to you——

MRS. A. Me?

HENRY. You—my friend.

MRS. A. Your mother was my school-girl confidant. For her, I welcomed, introduced you—became your—— (*she hesitates and stops.*)

HENRY. Guardian angel.

MRS. A. (*shrugging her shoulders, and withdrawing slightly from him.*) Yes, if you like. But angels seem chilly to me. Heaven must be so, when one thinks of the alternative.

HENRY. Then,—my patron saint.

MRS. A. Religion again. (*Sadly.*) And heart chill. (*She laughs bitterly and turns to him.*) What shall I do?

(*Ruth reappears among the shrubberies at the back, and moves forward briskly until she sees Henry and Mrs. Allen. Then she stops and watches them from the shrubberies.*)

HENRY. Make her mindful of all that lies between us. How much——

MRS. A. (*bitterly.*) And little?

HENRY. Yes.

MRS. A. What need? We both know.

HENRY. But *she* does not.

MRS. A. She?

HENRY. This woman I love.

(*Mrs. Allen glances into his face a moment, then, with a sigh, turns from him. Doing so, she catches sight of Ruth. The woman and girl gaze upon each other as Henry proceeds.*)

HENRY. I love! Ah, in that little word lies worlds of joy,—and pain. We loved as children; for years I saw her not,—we met at Valley Forge, renewed that sweet past. (*Sadly.*) And to-day, with her love burning in my heart,—I denied her. She thinks 'tis you.

RUTH (*advancing*). She knows 'tis not.

HENRY. Ruth!

(*The three stand for a moment silently, Ruth and Henry gazing upon each other, Mrs. Allen looking first at Henry, then toward Ruth. Mrs. Allen goes to them, takes Ruth's hand and places Henry's in it, then slowly bends down and kisses*

Henry's hand. After gazing a moment into Henry's face, she withdraws through the arbor and makes her way among the shrubberies toward the right.)

(Cloe enters at the back, quickly. Mrs. Allen intercepts her, places her hand upon Cloe's arm, and points to Ruth and Henry, enjoining silence upon Cloe with a gesture. The two women stand for a moment at the entrance, gazing upon the two lovers, Mrs. Allen very sadly, and Cloe amazed and terrified, as if beholding an apparition. The lady and negress then disappear from view.)

RUTH *(throwing her arms around Henry's neck)*. At last! My heart's at rest.

HENRY. And I live,—hope again. For you are here.

RUTH. Can you forgive? My jealousy, cruel words, my bitter thoughts?

HENRY. Did they not prove your love?

RUTH. I groped in darkness. Then, your danger made all clear. Now, I'll set you free. *(She leaves him, crossing toward the right.)* Come.

HENRY. Free?

RUTH. A moment since, I learned all there was against you,—our meeting at Valley Forge, which I'll deny, the theft of some papers.

HENRY. A list of troops. *(He puts his hand to his bosom.)*

RUTH. Aye. When that's explained, you will be free.

HENRY. But how explain?

RUTH. The weapon of honest men. Tell them the truth, that you did not take them.

HENRY. You think me innocent?

RUTH. I *know*. How could I doubt, and still love? Why should you take the list? A good Tory——

HENRY *(slowly)*. I am *not* a Tory.

RUTH. Not a Tory? Then—*(gradually realizing the truth)* it is true? You are a spy?

HENRY. A spy? *(Bitterly.)* Yes. That is what they must call me.

(*Ruth stands dazed a moment, then, the sequence of events shaping themselves in her mind, she understands all.*)

RUTH. Oh! Oh! Oh! (*She turns upon Henry with intense scorn.*) A pretender! A deceiver! A cheat! Learning the secrets of others on which their lives depend—only to betray them.

HENRY. Listen! In war——

RUTH (*interrupting him*). A traitor!

HENRY. Not to my country.

RUTH. But to *my* king. (*With intense scorn.*) And you ask mercy? You, whose whole life is a lie?

HENRY (*protesting*). I ask not mercy. Alone I waged this battle of deceit, alone I reap its fruits—conquest, or death. Yes. My whole life is a lie! I admit it, without regret. I deceived you at Valley Forge, because the truth increased my danger. And now, since you know all, I ask not mercy, but forgiveness.

RUTH. Your love for me is a lie, like the rest?

HENRY. Well may you accuse me. Call me traitor, deceiver, cheat. Oh! I know, I know, and regret not. But suffer? Often beyond endurance. Words of love, smiles of friendship, kindnesses that wring my heart. Demons haunting my waking hours, peopling my dreams, whispering, always whispering, "False. False. Deceiver. Deceiver."

RUTH. Then fight like a man. Be not a Judas in the camp of your enemies.

HENRY. Better a death-wound in battle, than the smiles of those I betray. And yet, I must.

RUTH. But why? Oh, 'tis a mad dream.

HENRY. No. A sacrifice.

RUTH. Giving your life for rioters—vagabonds! What is more mad?

HENRY (*moved with intense patriotic devotion*). I see starving men on a hillside, with garments in rags, their shoeless feet imprinting blood upon the snow. Traitors? Vagabonds? No! They are men—fearless, steadfast, giving life for their cause.

RUTH. For these you would die?

HENRY. No. For their land and mine. If they starve, so can I. If they die, so will I—that we, and our children, and our children's children may be free.

RUTH. A heresy!

HENRY. The right!

RUTH. Law, order, our King is right! Renounce this madness and go free.

HENRY. And be a double traitor. (*He draws the packet of blue paper from his pocket.*) See.

RUTH. The missing paper?

HENRY. Yes. Upon this a battle depends. I secured it to-day, determined to make my copy, return the original unperceived, set forth within the hour, then——

RUTH. Then? (*After a moment of silent inquiry, she gives a startled cry and covers her face with her hands.*) 'Tis as vivid as the lightning. I came, recognized you! Suspicions were aroused——

HENRY. The game was almost won. On the one hand my life——

RUTH. Your life? Oh, forgive me! (*sobbing*)

HENRY. And on the other this (*indicating paper*). A signal for battle.

RUTH. Let me make amends—undo the havoc I have wrought.

HENRY (*comforting her*). Havoc? Nay, I'm going to safety—success. Ruth? No! No! Be brave. Think! A few moments' crouching behind hedges and in the cornfields, a brush with the pickets, thence to the forest where my horse awaits me. Dearest! No more tears. You break my heart. Good-bye (*he kisses her*). Good-bye (*he turns to go*).

RUTH. The dangers.

HENRY (*smiling*). Familiar companions.

RUTH. Think of me. I love you.

HENRY (*gazing fondly upon her*). You tempt me beyond reason. (*Hesitates, then with sudden resolution.*) No! No! Farewell.

(*He tears himself from her and acrosses to the left, then stops suddenly as a snapping of twigs is heard in the adjacent shrubberies. Ruth hurries to him anxiously.*)

HENRY (*whispering*). Hush! (*He draws her quickly behind the willow-tree at left.*)

(*Sergeant O'Leary and two English soldiers break through the shrubberies on the left. The two soldiers cross in the background, thrusting their bayonets into the shrubberies and peering amongst the shadows. O'Leary does the same, advancing through the arbor. Then he turns, and calls with hand to mouth.*)

O'LEARY (*calling*). Oh—o—o!

SOLDIERS' VOICES (*in the distance, at right.*) Oh—o—o!
(*In the distance, on the left.*) Oh—o—o!

(*O'Leary resumes his search. He sees Ruth, and stops in surprise.*)

O'LEARY. Who's there?

RUTH (*advancing*). 'Tis I—Ruth Weldin.

O'LEARY (*saluting*). The Lieutenant's lady. (*Embarrassed.*) Sure, I forgot ye were here. I—I'm not intruding?

RUTH. No. I—I came but to take the air.

O'LEARY. And drame. Ah, these swate colleens, these swate colleens! (*Laughing softly.*) Oft I've sat in the moonlight o'night's, yonder, over sea's, with her, draming,—an'—an'——(*he stops embarrassed.*) Fain would Dennis O'Leary not trouble ye, miss, but we've nought else to search.

RUTH. Only this garden?

O'LEARY. Aye! Here we find our game.

RUTH. The spy?

O'LEARY. Aye! Have ye ever been to the miller's, mistress, and seen those corn bags that close with a sthring? (*He illustrates with his hands.*) Even so we have this fellow. Closer and closer, smaller and smaller the hole, until——(*He is looking toward Ruth and sees Henry's shadow beside the tree trunk. His expression suddenly changes, and he begins to raise his gun.*)

RUTH. What is it?

O'LEARY. I thought I saw by the tree, yonder——

RUTH (*looking toward the tree*). 'Tis nothing.

O'LEARY. No, 'tis gone. I must have been dreaming. You know, mistress, when we want a thing to be, we think 'tis so.

RUTH. I know. (*She turns from him to hide her face, which is blanched with terror.*)

O'LEARY. I'll not trouble ye more. You'll go into the house, bye and bye, then we'll search here.

RUTH (*curtesying*). I thank you. (*She extends her hand toward O'Leary, who makes a motion as if to kiss it, then pauses in embarrassment. Ruth slowly raises her hand until it touches his lips. O'Leary draws back, greatly flattered and pleased, and bows low, then turns and retires through the arbor.*)

O'LEARY (*calling as before*). Oh-o-o !

SOLDIERS' VOICES (*very near on the right*). Oh—o—o !
(*Very near on the left.*) Oh—o—o !

(*O'Leary passes from sight on the right.*)

(*Henry advances from his place of concealment.*)

RUTH (*greatly agitated, and going to him*). They will——

HENRY. It must be.

RUTH. Your life?

HENRY. Is forfeit. Oh, that this sacrifice is not in vain.

RUTH (*in agony*). Henry !

HENRY. I forget. (*Comforting her.*) Be brave, dearest, be brave. Think what I renounce. I've failed,—my mission's ended. The army, yonder among the hills, must wait in vain. As for these—— (*He takes the packet of papers from his pocket.*)——all that is needed for a victory.—(*He lifts his arm to throw the packet among the shrubberies.*)

RUTH (*intercepting his intended action*). All that lies between you and safety—(*she takes the dispatches from his uplifted hand*).

HENRY. Why did I not think? You will start them on their way? Give them but to Mrs. Allen, and all is well.

RUTH. They shall reach their destination.

HENRY (*embracing her*). My heart is light again. (*Then his manner suddenly changes.*) No! No! You become my accomplice. (*He attempts to take the papers from her.*)

RUTH. They will not suspect *me*.

HENRY. You are a woman.

RUTH (*turning suddenly upon him*)! Would you do as much for me?

HENRY. A thousand times!

RUTH. Then 'tis my right. A pledge of our love!

HENRY. You become equally guilty.

RUTH. I care not.

HENRY. A traitor to your King.

RUTH. A traitor? (*She looks into Henry's face.*) I am no traitor. You are my king.

DEVILLIERS (*speaking in the distance on the right*). Halt! (*Henry and Ruth turn in apprehension.*)

HENRY. Go. Go.

RUTH. No—Here——

HENRY. If taken with me, it means death. You must. (*He points to the right. Ruth slowly advances in that direction. Henry withdraws into the arbor, the shadows of its foliage completely concealing him.*)

(*Simultaneously, Devilliers appears on the right with O'Leary.*)

DEVILLIERS. The cordon is placed?

O'LEARY. Yes, sir.

DEVILLIERS. Then keep within earshot, to answer my signal.

(*O'Leary salutes and withdraws. Devilliers turns and encounters Ruth, who has seated herself on the bench at the right.*)

DEVILLIERS. Ah!

RUTH (*feigning indifference*). You have returned?

DEVILLIERS. The negress, searching for you, heard voices here.

RUTH. Impossible.

DEVILLIERS. A *man's* voice.

RUTH. I was alone,—dreaming in the moonlight—(*she crosses*)—was returning to the house. You will accompany me?

DEVILLIERS. My duty.

RUTH. Duty? Before my pleasure?

DEVILLIERS. I must capture a spy.

RUTH. Sampson? He has escaped.

DEVILLIERS. He is *here*. (*He slowly raises to his lips a whistle, which hangs suspended by a cord about his neck, meanwhile watching Ruth intently.*)

RUTH (*perceiving the action*). What would you do?

DEVILLIERS. Summon my men.

RUTH. He is not here! He is not here!

DEVILLIERS. The negress saw him. (*He again puts the whistle to his lips.*)

RUTH (*who seeks to delay his action*). She was deceived. I would have seen him. (*Pleading.*) Listen. Listen. You must! Sampson is not a spy.

DEVILLIERS. You are his chief accuser. At Valley Forge——

RUTH (*interrupting*). And I say—(*hesitates, then boldly*). It was not he. Your only other proof, the stolen papers——

DEVILLIERS. Will send him to the gallows.

RUTH. He did not take them.

DEVILLIERS (*laughing*). Who else?

RUTH. Myself. (*She hands the packet to Devilliers.*)

DEVILLIERS (*after examining the packet a moment, and smiling*). I did not expect such rich returns. My ruse——

RUTH (*terrified*). Ruse?

DEVILLIERS. Sought but to betray your love—for this spy.

RUTH (*feigning indifference*). Love him? Whom I met but once? Absurd. (*Forcing a laugh.*)

DEVILLIERS. You *do* love him. And for that love discarded me——

RUTH. No! No!

DEVILLIERS. And while your lips form that denial, your actions say—"I love, I love."

RUTH. I told you nothing.

DEVILLIERS. Twice you betrayed it. First by jealousy, and now, through fear.

RUTH (*boldly*). Yes, I love him with my whole heart and soul I love him.

DEVILLIERS. And to insure his safety will make another sacrifice.

RUTH. Sacrifice?

DEVILLIERS. I can be convinced that the negress lied—that Sampson is not here.

RUTH. She is mistaken. I know it.

DEVILLIERS. I believe he is here. You can persuade me to the contrary. In that event I abandon the search.

RUTH. I give you my word——

DEVILLIERS. I must have more. (*He comes up very close to her.*) Can you not guess? (*He seizes her hand.*) Your surrender! (*He attempts to embrace her.*)

RUTH (*breaking from him*). No! No!

DEVILLIERS. Am I to be convinced? Is he here?

RUTH. Think what it means.

DEVILLIERS. To him? I know.

RUTH. To me. To me. (*She turns to him quickly.*) Beside, I proved his innocence. At Valley Forge——

DEVILLIERS. That meeting denied, these papers returned? 'Tis but a fraction of our proof.

RUTH. You deceive me!

DEVILLIERS (*peremptorily*). Is he here?

RUTH. You ask me to sell my hand. Oh, wait—wait——

DEVILLIERS. No, it must be now. (*He again attempts to seize her in his arms.*) Tell me, is he here?

HENRY (*emerging from the arbor*). Yes.

DEVILLIERS (*laughing*). My prisoner, sir.

HENRY (*who is very calm*). No, I am free. (*He approaches Devilliers.*) Since one must die——

DEVILLIERS. One?

HENRY. You—or I.

DEVILLIERS. A challenge? (*Laughing.*) I decline.

HENRY (*striking Devilliers*). You must.

DEVILLIERS (*enraged*). This insult——

HENRY (*very calm*). Avenge it, if you are a man. 'Tis nothing to what you have heaped upon her. (*He points to Ruth.*) Insults, dangers, too.

DEVILLIERS. I'm ready. (*He casts his cloak and hat upon the bench at right.*)

RUTH (*pleading*). Henry!

HENRY (*with dogged calmness*). All the angels in heaven could not stay my hand. Go!

(*Ruth draws back from him, looking into his face with an expression partly of fear and partly awe. Then she takes his hand and presses it to her bosom, between hers. The action arouses Henry and he turns to her.*)

HENRY. Ruth! (*He seizes her in his arms, kisses and thrusts her gently from him.*) I'll need your prayers. Farewell.

(*Ruth goes out of the garden on the right.*)

(*Henry turns to Devilliers, who has drawn his pistol and now raises it slowly toward Henry.*)

DEVILLIERS. I have the upper hand now. (*Henry slowly approaches Devilliers.*) Not a step nearer. (*Henry pauses.*) I would kill you like a dog, were it not for the pleasure of seeing you mount the scaffold, suffer the tortures of death.

(*Henry springs forward suddenly, and dashes the pistol from Devillier's hand.*)

HENRY. I am ready.

DEVILLIERS. But weaponless.

HENRY. No. (*Holding out his arms.*) These, that nature gave us,—arms to overcome,—fingers to strangle. Come!

(*Devilliers springs upon Henry. A struggle ensues after the order of wrestling. Devilliers nearly throws Henry, who twists back into position, and renews the struggle. Then Henry over-*

powers and strangles Devilliers, casting his body among the shrubberies, so that it is completely concealed. Henry seizes Devillier's military cloak and hat from the bench and dons them, picks up the pistol from the ground and turns to approach the shrubberies on the left. Then he pauses, quickly returns to Devilliers and takes from his bosom the packet of dispatches, holding them up in the moonlight to surely identify them. Then he advances to the left and disappears amongst the shrubberies.)

(A soldier's voice is heard on the left.)

SOLDIER. Halt! *(A moment of silence.)* Beg pardon, Lieutenant. Good-night!

END OF THIRD ACT.

THE FOURTH ACT.

Mrs. Henderson's Drawing Room, as in the Second Act. Night still lingers in the apartment, but through the curtains of the window, the landscape, enshrouded in a heavy mist, is showing the first gray streaks preceding the dawn. The light gradually broadens into sunrise, as the act progresses.

Seated at the table, near the center of the room, Devilliers is playing cards with Captain Gower—a tall, blond, blase officer in English uniform. A pile of coin and notes lies at Gower's elbow. The coats and wigs of the men are cast aside. By the fireplace on the right, Colonel Clement is seated in an armchair fully dressed and soundly sleeping, his wig askew.

The room is in great disorder. Empty wine glasses, partly filled decanters, pipes and tobacco lie scattered about. The candles burn low in their sockets, or are sputtering, as if to go out. A sentinel paces to and fro outside of the window.

DEVILLIERS (*who is tipsy*). Twenty.

GOWER. Your note of hand?

DEVILLIERS. An order on the paymaster.

GOWER. Done.

(They play, Devilliers pours a glass of wine, and tosses off the liquor.)

GOWER. You've had enough, Lieutenant.

DEVILLIERS. Zounds, man, I'm not drunk.

GOWER. Play. *(They proceed with the play.)*

DEVILLIERS (*apologetically, as an afterthought*). I need the wine to brace me.

GOWER. You should be at the hospital.

DEVILLIERS. Pshaw! You speak as if I'd been drawn and quartered. What's a fracas more or less?

GOWER. Lucky you were not killed.

DEVILLIERS (*putting his hand to his neck-cloth and coughing*). 'Twas not his fault that I wasn't.

GOWER (*throwing his last cards upon the table*). A king and jack. You loose.

DEVILLIERS. Damn such luck. Another !

GOWER (*rising*). I'm done.

DEVILLIERS (*angrily*). And I'm bankrupt, man. Would you have me believe——?

GOWER (*shrugging his shoulders and reseating himself*). As you please. And the stakes?

DEVILLIERS. Your night's winnings against an order on my estate.

(*A bugle sounds in the distance, followed by other similar calls. Gower glances toward the window.*)

GOWER. Zounds! 'Tis morning.

DEVILLIERS (*tipsily*). What if it is, we can sleep all day.

GOWER. And the trial of the spy?

DEVILLIERS. I forgot that. (*He throws his cards upon the table.*) And I should have been fit.

GOWER (*gathering up and pocketing the money upon the table*). A bath and a bracer will make you so.

DEVILLIERS (*pointing to Clement*). The Colonel ! (*Laughing.*) Sleeping there all night. (*He goes to Clement and shakes him.*) Wake up ! Wake up !

CLEMENT (*awakening*). What's the matter? (*He looks about the room and yawns.*) What time is it?

DEVILLIERS. Six o'clock.

CLEMENT (*yawning*). Oh ! (*He nurses his head in his hands.*)

(*Devilliers and Gower put on their wigs and coats and straighten their apparel.*)

CLEMENT (*rising and stretching himself*). I'm going to bed.

DEVILLIERS. You forget the trial.

CLEMENT. Hang the spy.

GOWER (*laughing*). That's what we're going to do. (*The hoofbeats of a horse are heard approaching. The three men turn to listen.*)

DEVILLIERS. What's wrong at this hour?

(A cavalryman enters through the window. He presents a packet to Clement.)

GOWER. Dispatches ?

DEVILLIERS. An emergency.

SOLDIER *(to Clement)*. With Colonel Musgrave's compliments, sir. Our scouts brought word before daylight.

CLEMENT *(saluting)*. My compliments to Colonel Musgrave. They shall be forwarded at once.

(The soldier withdraws through the window. The hoof-beats of his horse die away in the distance.)

(Clement opens the packet and glances through its contents.)

CLEMENT. Another cry of "Wolf-Wolf." *(Reads from dispatches.)* "Renewed activity among the enemy. Yesterday they began to entrench themselves in their camp at Pennypacker's Mills, as if anticipating an attack." *(He flings the dispatches upon the table.)* They're always active—in defence.

DEVILLIERS *(laughing)*. But never dare strike.

GOWER *(approaching the window)*. So we can seek our beds in security. Gentlemen, good night—or, rather, good morning. *(He goes out through the window.)*

CLEMENT. Answer the report, Lieutenant. You know what to say. And send for me when the officers come.

DEVILLIERS. Yes, sir.

(Clement exits, yawning, on the left.)

(The dawn has brightened, the sky is overcast, a fog enshrouds the landscape.)

(Devilliers draws back the curtains of the window, and the room is illuminated with the light of the morning. He gazes a moment upon the mist and sky, then advances, surveying the room.)

DEVILLIERS. Fool ! *(He goes to the table and drinks a glass of wine.)* And now for the letter. *(He rummages in the drawer of the table, gradually becoming angry.)* Why can't they keep the paper handy ? *(He tosses the contents of the drawer upon the table.)* They've been cleaning up again,—

putting everything where it *don't* belong. Ah ! (*He takes writing materials from the drawer, sits at the table, and begins to write.*) "The reports which the spy——" Pshaw ! (*He scratches out the word.*) I can think of nothing else. (*Writes.*) "The scouts—forwarded—are but idle rumors. Our recent success—in frustrating the schemes—of the Rebel spy—will, we believe—end further efforts to learn of our movements—thus crippling the activities of the enemy."

(*Mrs. Henderson enters on the left.*)

MRS. H. (*going to the window.*) The messenger brought news ?

DEVILLIERS (*as he writes.*) Nothing of consequence. And Miss Ruth ?

MRS. H. I've been with her all night. She's inconsolable.

DEVILLIERS. Unduly apprehensive, perhaps. (*During the following he folds and addresses the letter.*)

MRS. H. (*shivering, she leaves the window and crosses to the fireplace.*) Oh, what a morning.

DEVILLIERS. A storm is brewing.

MRS. H. (*sadly.*) Yes, a storm—without and within.

(*Devilliers takes up sealing-wax and a seal, and during the following seals the packet containing his letter and the dispatches. Mrs. Henderson puts the room to rights.*)

MRS. H. The trial will be held here ?

DEVILLIERS. Yes, around this table. Colonel Blackwell.

MRS. H. (*placing chairs about the table as she repeats the names.*) Colonel Blackwell.

DEVILLIERS. Major Saunders.

MRS. H. Major Saunders.

DEVILLIERS. Colonel Clement ?

MRS. H. Colonel Clement.

DEVILLIERS. And Harris, as secretary.

(*Mrs. Henderson places a chair for Harris, and arranges the writing materials in front of it.*)

MRS. H. (*surveying the chairs.*) It seems like preparing

for an execution. (*Turning to Devilliers wistfully.*) Oh, Lieutenant, can nothing be done?

DEVILLIERS (*sealing the letter.*) The evidence is most conclusive.

MRS. H. But you are the chief witness.

DEVILLIERS. True. (*He is silent a moment.*) Mrs. Henderson, I trust you realize the position in which I am placed. First, regarding your niece. The feeling I entertain toward her——

MRS. H. I know—(*patting his arm affectionately*)—and approve.

DEVILLIERS. In return, her affection——

MRS. H. You can win, I'm sure. She loves no one else.

DEVILLIERS (*dropping the letter and wax*). Oh——

MRS. H. What?

DEVILLIERS (*nursing his finger*). I burned myself.

MRS. H. We're all likely to do that, if too reckless. (*After a pause, and while arranging the furniture.*) I not only approve of your courtship, but will give you every assistance.

DEVILLIERS. The unfortunate complications of last night make my position a difficult one.

MRS. H. Oh! This terrible affair. What do you advise?

(*Devilliers has finished sealing the letter. Mrs. Henderson removes the implements.*)

DEVILLIERS. If Miss Ruth is frank—tells *all* she knows

MRS. H. Of course. She will.

DEVILLIERS. And if her affections are mine——

MRS. H. Yes. Yes. Why did I not think? As her accepted lover, you will have the right to shield her.

DEVILLIERS. Exactly. (*He smiles and crosses to the fireplace, where he taps the Chinese gong upon the mantel.*) In that case my evidence regarding her will never be uttered.

MRS. H. And as for Sampson——

DEVILLIERS (*with fierce bitterness*). Zounds ! What care I for him.

MRS. H. (*laughing*). What, indeed? (*She goes to Devilliers and seizes his hand.*) Oh, Lieutenant, you make me happy—very happy. Ruth is my brother's only child—I love her dearly, am responsible for her, while here. If you are silent—nay, one word on her behalf—and she will stand as free from the shadow of this treason as if it had never been. (*She turns toward the window.*) Oh, what need of sunshine now?

(*Harris appears on the left.*)

DEVILLIERS (*giving Harris the letter.*) This must be forwarded at once to His Excellency, General Howe.

HARRIS. Yes, sir.

DEVILLIERS. The officers have not arrived?

HARRIS. They may, at any moment.

DEVILLIERS. Then bring the spy here—at once.

HARRIS. Yes, sir. (*He exits.*)

MRS. H. (*advancing*). But how accomplish this result?

DEVILLIERS. You promised every assistance.

MRS. H. You wish me——? (*She hesitates.*)

DEVILLIERS. I am her suitor. Frankness becomes difficult.

MRS. H. How stupid of me ! I will plead your cause, of course—her aunt, her adviser.

DEVILLIERS. And above all, a woman.

MRS. H. Yes. Yes. I'll do it—plead as if my own love was at stake.

DEVILLIERS. Let her tell all she knows. Remember, *all*. (*Hesitating slightly.*) I cannot appear before the court as her champion unless certain of how great, or little, is her knowledge—her relations with Sampson—how she secured the stolen paper, what she was to do with it.

MRS. H. You shall know all. Is she not loyal?

DEVILLIERS. Then, if you can hint at my sentiments—

MRS. H. Trust me for that. She shall be yours.

(*Mrs. Henderson and Devilliers retire toward the window,*

as the door on the left is thrown open and several English soldiers enter, taking positions on either side of the door. Devilliers glances through the door, and smiles in triumph. Sergeant O'Leary enters and salutes.)

O'LEARY. The prisoner. (*He takes a step aside.*)

(*Ruth Weldin enters. She slowly advances, without perceiving Devilliers, who crosses and motions the soldiers to withdraw. They do so, O'Leary closing the door as he goes out.*)

(*During the opening portion of the following dialogue, Ruth's mind is apparently benumbed with suffering. She sits by the table, her back turned upon Devilliers, who remains, unperceived by Ruth, near the window. When the girl turns toward him, Devilliers conceals himself behind the curtains of the window alcove, afterward reappearing.*)

MRS. H. (*caressing Ruth*). Ruth! Darling! Think of your danger.

RUTH (*in a monotone*). He has escaped.

MRS. H. In a moment they will be here—you, tried as a spy.

RUTH (*as before*). He has escaped.

MRS. H. But *you*, a prisoner,—the guilty one.

RUTH. He has escaped. (*She smiles.*)

MRS. H. Ruth! Arouse! (*She seizes Ruth's arm.*)
Niece! Think!

RUTH (*startled, as if awaking*). Aunt? (*She rises.*)
What is it? (*She looks about the room. Her gaze rests upon the chairs at the table, and preparations for the trial, and she suddenly awakens to her situation.*) Ah!

MRS. H. In a moment the court convenes.

RUTH. To try *me*?

MRS. H. I tremble at the thought.

RUTH. They have nothing against me.

MRS. H. Nothing? Ah, Ruth, little do you realize the truth. They say you shielded Sampson, aided him to steal the papers, were responsible for his escape.

RUTH. Anyone in my place would have done the same.

MRS. H. Not if they were loyal.

RUTH. I was loyal, and thereby offended. You would have done the same. I met Henry—Sampson at Valley Forge, knew him as a Tory. I recognized him here as such. What harm in that? Little thought I to betray him.

MRS. H. The same man, then?

RUTH. Yes. Yes.

MRS. H. A spy?

RUTH. He sought not to conceal it. But oh, what had I done? My recognition led to his arrest—this train of horrors. But one thought filled my heart—to make amends. The soldiers came, I concealed him. Arrest was certain, and I, to undo the havoc I had wrought—took the stolen papers to deliver them to——

MRS. H. Another? (*Ruth is silent.*) An accomplice? (*Anxiously.*) Who?

RUTH. No!

MRS. H. Why did you take them? Tell me!

RUTH. I will not.

MRS. H. Your words convict you. Oh! 'Tis hopeless indeed.

RUTH. Let them do what they will. (*Sinks into a chair and wearily covers her face with her hands.*) I care not.

(*Devilliers advances. Mrs. Henderson motions him to retire.*)

MRS. H. (*going to Ruth.*) I care, Ruth. (*She seizes Ruth in her arms.*)

RUTH (*sobbing and embracing Mrs. Henderson impulsively*). Aunt! Dear Aunt!

MRS. H. And *another* cares.

RUTH. You and——

MRS. H. A friend—loyal, steadfast, eager to stand between you and danger.

RUTH. Oh, tell me who?

MRS. H. A champion.

RUTH (*after a moment of puzzled doubt*). I know of none.

MRS. H. No one in this wide world for whose love you would go free.

RUTH. Yes! Yes! Oh, let me be free—for his sake.

MRS. H. Who loves you——

RUTH. Yes! (*Joyfully.*) He loves me.

MRS. H. Stands ready to lay his life at your feet.

RUTH. I know! I know!

(*Devilliers slowly advances towards Ruth.*)

MRS. H. Who waits to set you free.

RUTH (*puzzled*). Waits?

MRS. H. Even now!

RUTH. Set me free? Now?

MRS. H. And here! (*She indicates Devilliers.*)

(*Ruth turns and sees Devilliers.*)

RUTH. Oh!

MRS. H. Your champion.

RUTH. No! No!

MRS. H. Your lover.

RUTH. I hate him.

MRS. H. Ruth?

DEVILLIERS. And in return for that hatred, I offer you freedom.

RUTH. Those words insult me.

DEVILLIERS (*shrugging his shoulders*). As you please.
(*He crosses and taps the gong on the mantel.*)

MRS. H. (*pleading with Ruth*). Ruth. Think what it means.

RUTH. Make such a bargain? I will die first?

(*Harris enters on the left.*)

DEVILLIERS (*to Harris*). The officers are here?

HARRIS. Yes, sir.

DEVILLIERS. The prisoner awaits them.

(*Harris bows and goes out on the left.*)

MRS. H. (*pleading with Devilliers*). Lieutenant! Be not hasty. Give her but time——

DEVILLIERS. Events must take their course. I can do nothing.

MRS. H. (*in despair*). Alas!

(*Colonel Blackwell and Major Saunders, two English officers, enter on the left, followed by Harris. They take their chairs at the table. Devilliers goes to and converses with them. Ruth sits on the right, facing the officers. Mrs. Henderson takes up her position beside Ruth.*)

SAUNDERS. We need but Colonel Clement to complete the court. (*Colonel Clement enters on the left.*) Ah, we can proceed at once. (*Clement takes his seat at the table. Saunders turns to Mrs. Henderson.*) The prisoner has an advocate?

MRS. H. Yes, Lieutenant Devilliers.

DEVILLIERS. I beg your pardon, I decline.

MRS. H. (*anxiously*). What?

RUTH (*to Mrs. H.*). I would have refused him.

MRS. H. (*despairing*). Oh! Oh! Oh!

SAUNDERS (*rising and turning to Ruth, who also rises*).

This duty we are called hither to perform, mistress, is more painful than I can find words to express. (*With feeling.*) I—I need but think of my own daughters over seas, and what it would mean to me, were they here, instead of you. Yet, even with my offspring in the position you occupy, I would not hesitate. For the crime of high treason committed by a spy is the most heinous known to the law of nations—its penalty, death. The guilt of an accomplice must be regarded as equal to that of the principal, for upon the acts of both—the chief and minor offenders, jointly and together—rests the fulfilment of the treason. In this proceeding you are charged with being the accomplice of a daring, and desperate traitor—a spy. The crime is fulfilled—he has escaped. While every opportunity will be afforded for a defence, his actions must be considered as evidence against you. I warn you, for your own sake, to use no word or phrase which might increase the impression left by this adverse testimony.

(*He sits and Ruth resumes her chair.*) Now for the witnesses.
Colonel Clement.

CLEMENT. My statement relates to the manner in which Sampson stole the list of troops. (*He takes a paper from his pocket.*) I present a detailed report of the occurrence for the court's perusal. (*He hands the paper to Saunders.*)

SAUNDERS (*glancing through the paper*). Good. (*Passing paper to Harris.*) And now, Lieutenant. (*Devilliers rises.*)

MRS. H. Lieutenant! You promised——

DEVILLIERS. Under conditions which did not arise.

MRS. H. (*appealing to the officers*). Colonel! Major!

SAUNDERS. He must proceed.

MRS. H. And they call this justice?

SAUNDERS. In your own words, Lieutenant, relate what you know of the case.

(*During the following, Clement grows very sleepy, and dozes.*)

DEVILLIERS. You have been told how I was assaulted, —almost murdered by Sampson, who thereupon escaped? (*Saunders and Blackwell nod in assent.*) I met the prisoner in the garden. Evidently she had been conversing with the spy. When taken to task for this suspicious circumstance, she confessed that she had the papers——

RUTH (*astonished and half rising.*) Oh! (*Mrs. Henderson presses her back into her chair.*)

DEVILLIERS. How she obtained them I did not know until, a moment since, I heard from her own lips——

MRS. H. (*interposing sharply*) You must not! She spoke to me—in confidence, and you promised to be silent if— (*she hesitates.*)

DEVILLIERS. Exactly. If——

MRS. H. She became your wife.

(*Saunders and Blackwell turn to Devilliers in surprise.*)

DEVILLIERS (*to the officers.*) An excuse I had to give.

MRS. H. But——

SAUNDERS. 'Tis legal evidence. Proceed.

DEVILLIERS. She admitted meeting Sampson at Valley Forge, plotting with him to betray us.

RUTH (*rising excitedly*.) 'Tis false! 'Tis false!

DEVILLIERS. Last night she received the stolen letters to transmit to their accomplice.

RUTH (*to Saunders*.) I meant to return them, undo the theft, set him free. (*Devolliers laughs incredulously*.) Oh, believe him not.

DEVILLERS. I speak the truth.

RUTH (*scornfully, to Devillers*.) You know not what truth is. (*To Saunders*.) Oh, if you could see him as I do—the scoundrel. I told my story to my aunt—in confidence. He acted the part of the eavesdropper—the spy. Nor is that all. Last night——

DEVILLIERS (*interrupting sharply*.) You lie!

CLEMENT (*awaking from a sound sleep*.) A lie? Of course the prisoner lies.

SAUNDERS (*turning to Ruth*.) What of last night?

RUTH. He offered me Sampson's freedom for mine own.

SAUNDERS. Indeed!

DEVILLIERS. This girl's words——

BLACKWELL. Are entitled to some credence, sir.

RUTH. Oh, let me tell you all.

MRS. H. (*seeking to restrain her*.) Ruth——

RUTH. Better that, than his falsehoods. (*Indicating Devilliers*.)

MRS. H. (*anxiously*.) But——

RUTH. I have no fear.

SAUNDERS (*after a consultation with Clement and Blackwell*.) You confess—of your own free will?

RUTH. Yes.

SAUNDERS. Proceed. (*Ruth hesitates as to where to begin*.) You are a Rebel?

MRS. H. A Tory.

SAUNDERS. Let her swear it. (*He takes a Bible from the table and extends it toward Ruth*.)

SAUNDERS. You swear——

RUTH. That I am loyal—to my king.

SAUNDERS. His Majesty, George the Third.

RUTH. My king.

MRS. H. That proves her innocence.

SAUNDERS (*to Ruth*). You aided Sampson to escape?

RUTH. I did.

SAUNDERS. Deliberately?

RUTH. Most willingly.

SAUNDERS. But why?

DEVILLIERS. 'Tis simple enough.

SAUNDERS (*silencing Devilliers with a gesture*). You are discredited, sir. (*To Ruth.*) Why?

RUTH. I love him.

MRS. H. (*astonished*). Ruth?

RUTH. Yes—yes. I love him! And for that love I stand here—accused, condemned—and regret not.

SAUNDERS. This means——

RUTH. Yes, I am guilty—guilty——

(*Saunders, Blackwell and Clement consult in whispers, Devilliers has approached the window.*)

(*A soldier enters quickly through the window. He speaks to Devilliers in a whisper. Devilliers seems surprised at the information he imparts, and says a word to the soldier, who exits through the window quickly. Devilliers looks towards Ruth, smiling.*)

(*Saunders, Blackwell and Clement rise and turn to Ruth.*)

SAUNDERS. However we might have been prejudiced in your favor, these words leave us no alternative. The decision of the court is——

DEVILLIERS. One moment, gentlemen. I have been informed of another witness.

SAUNDERS. In her favor?

DEVILLIERS. Against her.

SAUNDERS. The testimony is needless. (*To Ruth.*) The sentence of the court is—death.

MRS. H. (*seizing Ruth in her arms and turning upon the officers in defiance*). You shall not!

(A file of soldiers appears outside of the window.)

RUTH. 'Tis my expiation—I have succeeded—he is free—he is free.

(The soldiers beyond the window separate, and Henry Culbertson walks through them and enters. His hands are tied behind his back, while over his shoulders is thrown Devilliers' scarlet cloak, which Henry donned in the preceding act.)

RUTH. Henry!

(The soldiers outside the window move off, except Sergeant O'Leary, who stands on guard at the window during the following.)

(The officers and Mrs. Henderson gaze upon Henry in amazement. Henry's manner is calm, even jesting at times.)

HENRY. I scarcely expected we should meet again. *(His eyes rest upon Ruth, and he turns to the officers with sudden apprehension.)* This girl?

DEVILLIERS *(in triumph)*. Even now sentenced as a spy.

HENRY. She is innocent.

SAUNDERS. What?

BLACKWELL. Impossible.

HENRY. The spy says it.

CLEMENT. It means your death.

HENRY. I came hither to die.

RUTH. Henry!

MRS. H. Are you mad?

HENRY. I could not let her—this girl I love—remain—here—alone—unprotected, to suffer for my offense.

SAUNDERS AND BLACKWELL. Ah!

DEVILLIERS *(joyfully)*. At last!

HENRY *(to Devilliers)*. I only regret I did not kill you. I thought I had. *(To the other officers.)* I came here as a spy—stole the papers, fought this scoundrel for his insult to yonder sweetheart—escaped——

CLEMENT. The accomplice?

HENRY. There was none. By ten o'clock I gained my horse in the forest. At midnight, with hard riding, I reached

our camp, placed my message in the hands of General Washington.

SAUNDERS (*greatly alarmed*). You mean——?

HENRY. Exactly. He has them now.

(*An excited consultation occurs between Clement, Devilliers and Blackwell.*)

HENRY. A few hours' sleep, I set forth to return, was arrested at your outposts— as I expected. What more need be said? I am here.

DEVILLIERS. Admittedly a Rebel spy.

HENRY. Lieutenant, I borrowed your cloak, and now return it, with thanks. (*He shifts his shoulders.*) As my hands are bound——

(*Devilliers snatches the cloak from Henry's shoulders. Henry stands revealed in the uniform of a Continental colonel.*)

HENRY (*to Devilliers*). You are answered. A spy? No. A Rebel? Yes—Colonel in Washington's army.

RUTH (*approaching him*). Henry! Henry! Are you mad?

HENRY (*whispering softly to Ruth*). You bid me fight.

RUTH. But not this suicide.

HENRY (*softly*). 'Twas to serve you.

RUTH. The folly of it.

HENRY. All is well. Believe me, all is well.

SAUNDERS (*turning to O'Leary*). To jail with him.

HENRY. I am ready.

(*O'Leary advances toward Henry.*)

(*A distant shot is heard. Henry turns to listen. Devilliers also hears it and turns. The others do not notice it.*)

SAUNDERS (*to Harris*). Call the guard. (*To O'Leary.*) You're not enough for both.

HENRY. Both? (*Indicating Ruth.*) She must go free.

SAUNDERS. Your accomplice?

HENRY. As innocent as your king himself.

DEVILLIERS. She stands convicted by her own words.

HENRY (*turning to Ruth in surprise*). Ruth!

RUTH (*going to Henry*). Your sacrifice is in vain. There is no escape.

HENRY (*softly to Ruth*). Nay. Never was hope brighter than now.

(*A volley of musketry heard in the distance.*)

(*Shouts outside of the window, bugle calls and beating of drums. All turn toward the window in astonishment.*)

BLACKWELL. The call to arms.

HENRY (*whispering to Ruth*). It has come!

(*A soldier appears in the window.*)

SOLDIER. The Rebels! The Rebels! An attack.

(*Clement, Devilliers and Blackwell run off followed by Mrs. Henderson. Saunders turns to Sergeant O'Leary.*)

SAUNDERS. Your life pays for their escape.

(*O'Leary salutes. Saunders exits hurriedly.*)

(*The sound of the battle increases in volume, growing nearer and nearer. Then there is a momentary lull.*)

RUTH. Henry! What does it mean?

HENRY. My dispatches delivered, the army moved before daybreak.

RUTH. To offer battle?

HENRY. Do you not hear?

(*The din of battle begins again, now close at hand.*)

(*Henry turns upon O'Leary, who presents his gun to bar Henry's progress. Henry struggles with the cords that bind him. Ruth loosens them. Henry springs upon O'Leary, and, after a moment of struggle throws him backward over a chair and seizes his gun.*)

(*A cheer rises above the din of battle. English soldiers seen in flight. American soldiers fill the background.*)

HENRY (*seizing Ruth in his arms*). Come! We are free!

THE END OF THE PLAY.

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